

April 2018

Carolina country




Carolina Country **Adventures**


Starting on page 40

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 Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

PERIODICAL

**Tree-trimming
by helicopter**
page 8

**Crash course on
birdwatching**
page 18

Need a new lawn mower? Consider going electric—page 24

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Carolina Country Adventures

Our state has something for everyone. We help prove that in our annual travel guide.

On the Cover

A couple takes in the sweeping view from Grandfather Mountain, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway near Linville. Learn about our state's many scenic drives and other destinations in our travel guide, beginning on page 40. Photo by Chip Henderson, VisitNC.com.



SWEEPSTAKES **Chetola Resort**

We've partnered with Chetola Resort at Blowing Rock on a drawing for a weekend getaway package. See page 37 for details.

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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to nearly 900,000 homes and businesses. The 26 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.


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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

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Soy ink is naturally low in VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and its usage can reduce emissions causing air pollution.

Life as a Lineman

By Shay Reed

When I became a lineman in 1995, I was blessed to learn from a crew leader and coworkers who taught me good work habits in regards to safety and how to get the job done. Those same work ethics have followed me my whole career.

I never wanted to let them down.

I also began to understand how important it was to always look out for my fellow linemen. They always watched my back, and I wanted to be there for them. This same relationship is why we all get out of bed at 3 a.m. to respond to an outage or any other need. I know that when I call,

someone will help me, and I want to extend the same to my co-workers. This is how a co-op lineman is born. We understand that the same people we live with in the community depend on us to be there when we are needed.

North Carolina has 26 electric cooperatives, and all electric co-op line-workers share this same characteristic.

Electric co-op linemen see all kinds of weather. We respond after hurricanes, ice and snow storms, tornadoes, or whatever comes our way. We know if our own area has been affected by major storms, other co-ops will respond to help us. This is just how it works. I have made many friends from other co-ops through our mutual aid agreement.

Contributing to our success is North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives'


Job Training & Safety team and its training facility at Nash Community College in Rocky Mount. Linemen are trained from very basic skills to the most advanced. Courses provide a benchmark to ensure all linemen are

being trained the same, and create an environment where linemen will work well together when the need arises, with standardized safety rules and construction designs.

I have attended courses at the facility, and I have been very fortunate to help instruct others in overhead line construction

through the program for the last several years. I got to teach with some of the same instructors I had learned from. These folks are some of the best linemen I have had the pleasure to meet and work with, and the training programs are second to none.

Our members are very important to us. We want to keep their lights on as well as their costs down. Technology has grown leaps and bounds in my career, but we have embraced it and found it to be more efficient.

I recently received my 25-year service award at EnergyUnited, and I look forward to what the future holds in a career that I love! I am proud to call myself a Lineman. 

Shay Reed is a crew leader at Statesville-based EnergyUnited.





THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

Carolina Country Adventures

Our April issue has arrived! For more than 20 years running, we've used this time of year to highlight destinations around the state with our annual travel guide. We hope you enjoy visiting these stops as much as we enjoyed writing about them. And thank you to all who shared can't miss roadside attractions—find reader favorites on page 42.

—Scott Gates, editor

Safe Nesting

I am writing you about your most recent magazine, March 2018. There is an article on page 42 ("Carolina Gardens") about garden to-do's for March. In the article, it says to "leave short pieces of string or yarn around the bird feeder now—your winged friend will really appreciate the extra nest building material!"

This is not what is best for local wildlife. When there is string and yarn in a nest, a baby bird can get its leg, wing or neck wrapped up, which can cause deep cuts. This can lead to serious permanent damage and even become life threatening. A better recommendation is pet hair (not human hair, which is too much like string); dog and cat hair is a great option.

Jessica Cline, Mount Pleasant,
a member of Piedmont EMC

Editor's Note: Thank you, Jessica! We asked our garden columnist, L.A. Jackson, for more information on nesting materials. Here's his reply:

Ideally, the string or yarn bits (use only natural fibers) should only be about an inch long—this cuts way down on the "tangle" threat. And while dog and cat hair also make good nesting material, such fluff and fuzz from Fido and Tabby should not be used if they are being treated for fleas and ticks. More great information about nesting materials is available online (bit.ly/nwf-nesting) from the National Wildlife Federation.



Libby Bagby and
her dog Lucky

Lucky Students

The article "Tales of the Plott Hound" in the January issue (page 26) was a nice update for me. Years ago, my colleague and I invited Libby Bagby and Lucky to speak to our special reading students at Hardin Park School.

Mrs. Bagby spoke to our students about our state dog and described the breed's skills, intelligence, and obedience. She then called for Lucky (hidden in the office) to sound his loud, unmistakable, tracking bark. To our students' amazement, he obeyed and then ran out of the office and sat at her feet. Talk about excited children!

She shared Lucky's rescue story and read her book, "Lucky's Plott," to the large group. It was a memorable experience for us all. I was sorry to hear of Lucky's passing, but thankful that Mrs. Bagby continues to write about North Carolina dogs and the character traits that make teachable lessons for our children.

Karen Holder, Boone,
a member of Blue Ridge Energy

Garden Residents

Our March cover model and associated article ("How Long do Spiders Live?" page 34) prompted plenty of feedback, especially on our Facebook (@carolinacountrymag) page. Here are some highlights from the conversation:



Great article. A couple of years ago I had a young man come up the mountain to cut down a very large oak tree that had died. It was very close to the house. As this man walked the stone path toward the tree, there was a spider web stretched across the shrubs. He was a tall lumberjack mountain man. He bent down and gently pinched the corners of the web, lifting it out of the path. Then he turned and laid the web to the side on another bush. He knew something that I surely didn't. Truly impressed me to learn more about spiders.

Donna Hologa

Last fall I had a giant female make several webs between my house and bushes...it was a HUGE inconvenience as I walked through there to water my flowers, but I allowed her to stay! As long as she was thriving OUTSIDE, away from my veggies & herbs so I wasn't sticking my hand in her path, we were OK. I did do a daily check to make sure of her location, I'm not a fan of spiders at all! Hopefully this year they find a new home, like my neighbor's. lol

Kerry McMenamin Chapman

I gotta say, this month's issue is face down on my coffee table! Haha!

Diana Stewart Michaud

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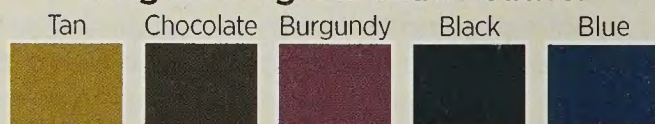
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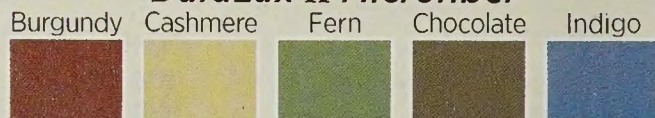
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The helicopter during a refueling stop

Aerial Blades Make Quick Work of Tree Trimming

Blue Ridge Energy members have been sharing online photos and video of something you don't see every day: an 800-pound, 10-blade aerial saw suspended from a helicopter. The Lenoir-based electric cooperative has been contracting with a professional aerial tree trimming firm in recent months as part of its right-of-way vegetation management program to maintain the most reliable electricity for its members.

"Given the machinery involved and the task being completed, I call it our 'Chopper Chopper,'" said Blue Ridge Energy member Wendell McKenzie of Boone. "Needless to say, it has been an entertaining spectacle to observe, albeit from a safe distance."

Blue Ridge Energy used the technique years ago, but is relying on more aerial tree pruning due to a shortage of tree workers and because it produces less impact to members' property. It also is a safe and environmentally friendly vegetation management practice, approved by the American National Standards Institute. The method works well in difficult terrain like the mountainous territory served by Blue Ridge—helicopter pilots carefully conduct pruning, and trained spotters on the ground are in constant communication with the pilot. Blue Ridge Energy employees also are on site during the process.

"As with our traditional right-of-way trimming method, property owners are notified in advance of pruning and debris is removed from

maintained areas. In non-maintained areas, debris is chipped or left to naturally biodegrade," said Blue Ridge Energy Director of Operations Robert Kent.

Electric co-ops across the state work to maintain clean rights-of-way through power line corridors, which help prevent outages when high winds, snow and ice topple trees and limbs.

"Maintaining clear rights-of-way also helps ensure the safety of our crews," Kent said. "And it helps them get the power back on faster should an outage occur."



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See the aerial blades in action during a right-of-way trimming.

\$11.5 MILLION
IN BRIGHT IDEAS GRANTS TO
NORTH CAROLINA
TEACHERS

25

YEARS
since the program's
inception in 1994

11

THOUSAND
projects sponsored

2.2

MILLION
students inspired

NC Teachers Received \$650,000 in Co-op Grants in 2017

North Carolina electric cooperatives awarded more than \$650,000 in Bright Ideas grants last year, supporting the work of K-12 teachers across the state.

More than 620 grants were awarded of the nearly 1,650 applications received. Those funds will support innovative classroom projects benefiting an estimated 150,000 students in North Carolina.

"The projects supported through the Bright Ideas program are always exceptional – they're a testament to the caliber of our state's educators and the care they take in bringing lessons to life in their classrooms," said program coordinator Safaniya Stevenson, community relations specialist for North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives. "It is an honor for electric cooperatives to support their efforts through this program."

Since the program began in 1994, educators statewide have received more than \$11.5 million in Bright Ideas grant funding, impacting well over 2.2 million students.

Grant applications for 2018 will be accepted beginning Sunday, April 1 through September. Grants are awarded in November.

For more information and to apply, visit ncbrightideas.com.

Be Safe Outside

10 Electrical Safety Tips for Spring

Temperatures are on the rise, and it's a great time for kids to get outside and put playground equipment to use after a long winter. It's easy for the electrical equipment that we see every day to fade into the background, but it's important to always take safety precautions around it.

Take time to explain to your kids how to be safe around electricity before they head outdoors.

Share these tips with kids when having a conversation about how to stay safe around outdoor electrical equipment:

1 Never enter an electrical substation for any reason. Even if a pet has entered inside or a ball goes over the fence, do not go in. Call your electrical cooperative for help. Substations should only be entered by professionals.

2 Kites should only be flown during good weather conditions and in large, open areas like a park or a field. Always look up and check for the location of overhead power lines and other electrical equipment, so that you can be sure to fly kites far away from them. A kite string can conduct electricity from an overhead line directly to the person on the ground.

3 Before climbing a tree, check that the tree and its branches are not located near any overhead power lines. Climbing a tree in contact with a power line can energize the tree with electricity and lead to electric shock or death.

4 Never throw objects at power lines. If something accidentally becomes caught on the lines, contact your electric cooperative for help.

5 If you ever see downed electrical wires, stay far away. Call 911 to have the utility notified. Downed lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be carrying electricity and be dangerous.

6 Do not play with, tamper with, or open outdoor electrical boxes. They contain electrical equipment for underground service to homes and businesses.

7 Check the forecast before going outside. Do not plan outdoor activities if a thunderstorm is expected because there is no safe place from lightning when you are outside. Follow the advice of the National Weather Service: "When thunder roars, go indoors."

8 Keep all long-handled tools out of reach of children so they will not be tempted to reach for or accidentally hit an overhead power line.

9 Pay attention to trees and power lines. Do not plant trees near them, and if there is a tree that has grown into a power line, make sure to call a professional to trim the tree.

10 Make sure all outdoor outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to help prevent electric shock.

For more information on electrical safety, contact your electric cooperative or visit SafeElectricity.org.

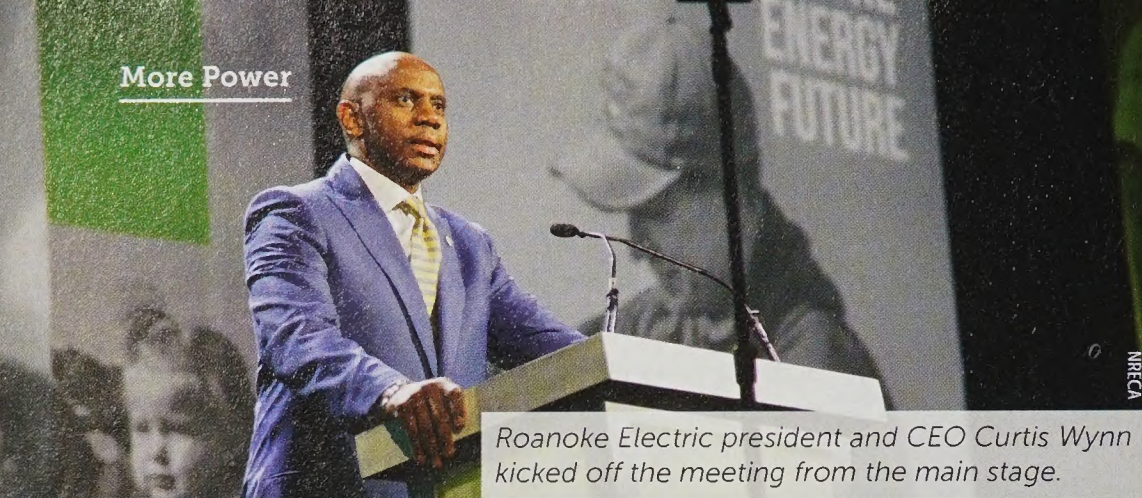
April 9 is National Lineman Appreciation Day

More than 15,000 electric cooperative lineworkers serve on the front lines of our nation's energy needs, maintaining 42 percent of electric distribution lines.

Lineworkers perform intricate work, often in dangerous conditions, to ensure we receive the safe, reliable power we depend on.

On April 9, use the hashtag #ThankaLineman on social media to show your gratitude to North Carolina's electric cooperatives' dedicated crews!





Roanoke Electric president and CEO Curtis Wynn kicked off the meeting from the main stage.

'Leading the Energy Future'

Electric co-op annual meeting attendees left enlightened and inspired

By Scott Gates

Leaders from electric cooperatives in North Carolina joined peers from around the country in February at the annual meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in Nashville. More than 6,000 attendees gathered for training and education, comparing notes on how electric cooperatives are utilizing new technologies to better serve their members.

Building for the future

Curtis Wynn, Roanoke Electric Cooperative president and CEO, kicked off the meeting from the main stage. Wynn currently serves as vice president on the NRECA Board of Directors. He recognized members of the board, and past presidents for their service and the legacy they have created, as well as international guests representing six countries.

"One way to think about legacy is not necessarily what you have done, but what you are building for the future," Wynn said. "Our meeting's theme this year concentrates on how cooperatives lead the future of energy. That leadership extends beyond America's borders."

The international arm of NRECA has developed and implemented electrification programs across the globe for more than 50 years, bringing electricity to more than 126 million people in 43 developing countries.

NC in the spotlight

North Carolina was represented throughout the agenda.

During a panel discussion, Bob Schwentker, retired general counsel for North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives, provided insight into the importance of sound board governance for member-owned electric co-ops.

At the TechAdvantage conference held in conjunction with the annual meeting, the state was represented in sessions by: Don Bowman, manager of Engineering at Wake Electric, who discussed modeling, as well as technology integration with Jim Musilek, director of Grid Modernization for North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives; Robert Kent, Blue Ridge Energy director of Operations, who discussed personal safety; Camryn Batchelor, system engineer at Piedmont Electric, who discussed automated pole inspections; Chuck Richardson, vice president of Engineering at South River EMC, who discussed operational efficiency; and Lee Ragsdale, senior vice president of Grid Infrastructure & Compliance for North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives, who discussed microgrid applications.

The cooperative movement

In his address to the crowd, NRECA President Phil Carson described the work of electric co-ops, through their storied past and all future work for members, as a movement.

"The electric cooperative movement belongs to all of the people we serve today, all the people we've served throughout history, and the millions of young people...who are counting



Singalreddy worked with attendees to contact their representatives about issues important to rural communities.

YLC Delegate Represents NC

Chetan Singalreddy attended this year's annual meeting as North Carolina's Youth Leadership Council (YLC) delegate. Singalreddy attended the 2017 Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., on behalf of Statesville-based EnergyUnited, and was nominated by his Youth Tour peers to serve on the YLC.


Singalreddy said his experiences during the trip to the nation's capital "changed his mind about politics," something he had not given much thought to before.

"I want to be more involved in politics, even at the local level," he said. "I really think there is a good potential for change, especially with my generation."

In meeting students from around the state through Youth Tour and from around the country through YLC, he has been impressed by how diverse and open-minded everyone is. As far as a takeaway message for folks back home, he has thoughts for both younger and older generations.

"If you're an adult, I would say look for ways to invest more in youth—they are the future. For younger people, look for more ways to be involved, especially with electric cooperatives," he said. "I really love the community emphasis electric co-ops place on their values. That's what electric co-ops are really all about: bettering the community."

Singalreddy is currently a senior at South Iredell High School. Undecided on which college he will be attending, he plans to study computer science and business.

on us to make sure the cooperative will still be going strong and relevant to their lives when it's their turn to chase the American dream," Carson said. "In a movement, your work never stops. Because the organizations we are building—vibrant civic institutions—can never be finished." 

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55-59	\$14.20	\$11.95	\$23.00	\$19.25	\$45.00	\$37.50	\$111.00	\$92.25
60-64	\$17.20	\$13.30	\$28.00	\$21.50	\$55.00	\$42.00	\$136.00	\$103.50
65-69	\$20.50	\$16.00	\$33.50	\$26.00	\$66.00	\$51.00	\$163.50	\$126.00
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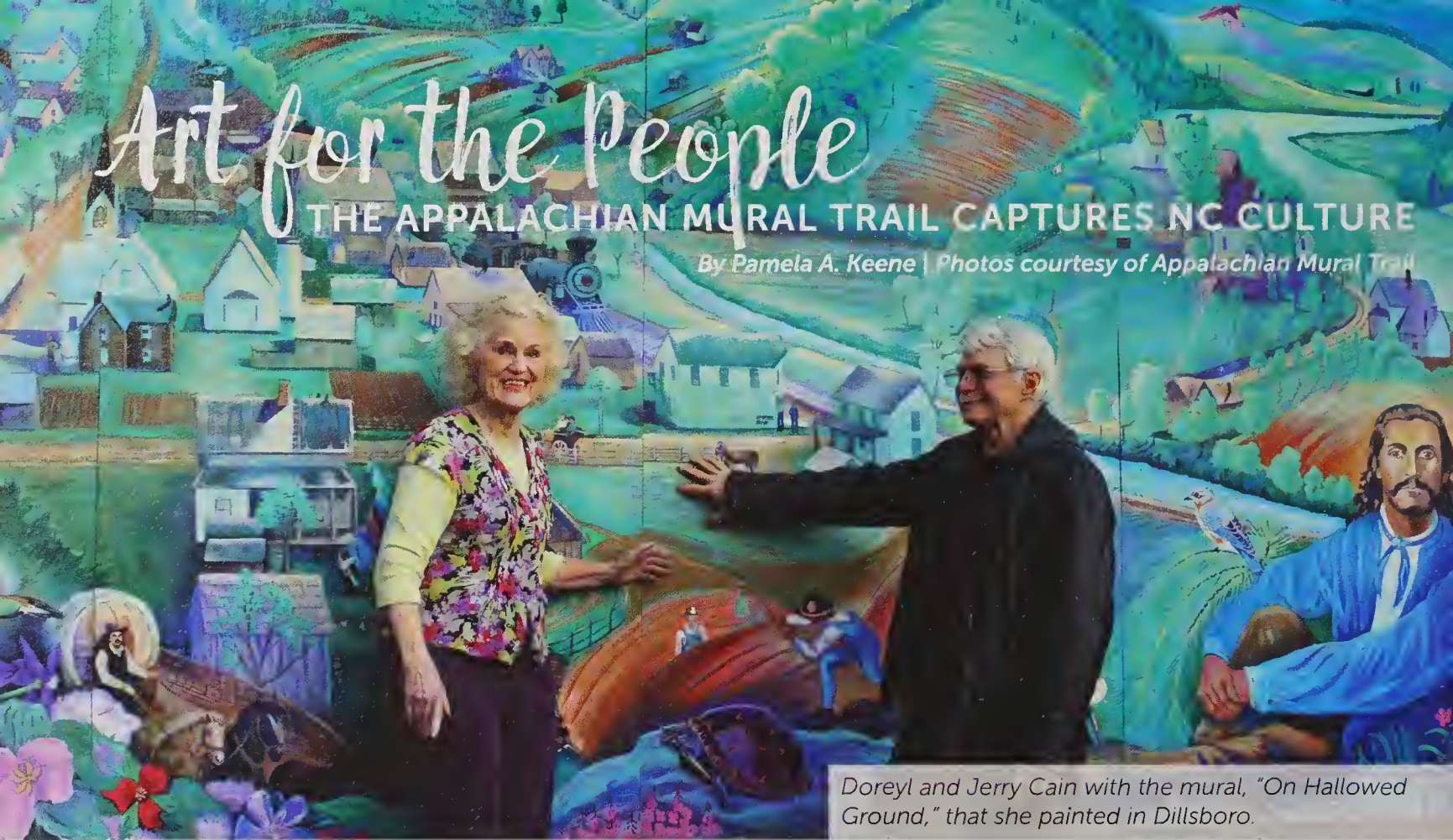
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Art for the People

THE APPALACHIAN MURAL TRAIL CAPTURES NC CULTURE

By Pamela A. Keene | Photos courtesy of Appalachian Mural Trail



Doreyl and Jerry Cain with the mural, "On Hallowed Ground," that she painted in Dillsboro.

You could call them drive-by history, the more than 45 murals that grace downtowns across western North Carolina that are the Appalachian Mural Trail. Most have been in place for years; others have been recently restored or even created from scratch by artists who want to preserve the history and beauty of the region.

"As a vital part of Appalachian culture, storytelling has kept our history alive," says artist Doreyl Ammons Cain, who with her husband, Jerry, created the Appalachian Mural Trail by linking murals through an interactive online itinerary and a printed brochure. "Historical public mural art really showcases life here through huge colorful images that capture and preserve our heritage for future generations. It's storytelling in a really big way."

Their vision took shape in fall 2016, when they set out to locate and catalog existing murals within a one-hour drive of the Blue Ridge Parkway. "So many people travel the parkway—more than 15 million a year—and we saw this as an opportunity to encourage people to take side trips to the nearby towns and communities. Several of these towns really needed an economic boost, and this just made sense."

MURAL TRAIL BEGINNINGS

Doreyl grew up in Jackson County, but she never lost her love for the mountains. After high school she headed to California for a stint in the Air Force, college on the GI bill to earn a masters' degree in biomedical illustration, and to found various marketing and advertising agencies. In the late 1980s, she moved back to her home state.

Shortly thereafter, she and her sister, Amy Ammons Garza, created "Catch the Spirit of Appalachia," a nonprofit group that supports all things Appalachian. The organization provides scholarships for Appalachian Studies, assists local authors with publishing, encourages young people to learn and play mountain music, and records oral histories and storytelling. The nonprofit organization received the 2013 Mountain Heritage Award from Western Carolina University.

Along the way, Doreyl began to work with smaller towns to develop festivals and community events.

In 2010, she produced Dillsboro's ColorFest, a juried arts and crafts event showcasing Appalachian crafts and fine arts. Two years later she created a mural in 2012 in downtown Dillsboro. Called "On Hallowed Ground," it tells the story of the founding of the town. It's 16 feet long and 8 feet tall and features images of town founder William Allen Dills and Chief Nimrod Jarrett Smith of the Eastern Band of Cherokee.

"You could say that this was the beginning of the mural trail, but it was several years before Jerry and I got really serious about it," she says. "Now, we engage people around the state to help us with 'mural spotting' to find more murals to add to the trail. And Jerry does all the work on the website to detail each mural's history, along with GPS locations, milepost markers and other information. We really wouldn't have the Appalachian Mural Trail without him."

STOPS ALONG THE TRAIL

Visitors to the site, muraltrail.com, can explore each mural in full color, read about the background of the scene pictured, create personalized itineraries for trips, post selfies in front of murals along the way, and in the process learn tidbits about history.

The murals are owned and maintained by governments or community organizations.

Appalachian Mural Trail, a project of a nonprofit organization, develops marketing materials, brochures and the trail's online presence.

The Appalachian Mural Trail is constantly evolving. Here are highlights from a few stops along the trail:

Asheville | In 2011, Asheville officials enlisted artist Molly Must to create a mural in Triangle Park. Collaborating with Just Folks Organization and the Asheville Design Center, Molly depicted the stories of

MURALS ARE ART FOR THE PEOPLE...THEY'RE HISTORIC, ARTISTIC AND A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO CELEBRATE THE LIVES AND TIMES OF THEIR PREDECESSORS.

this historic African-American business district on two sides of Triangle Park, encompassing Valley Street and East-End, also known as "The Block." From community discussions, archives, family stories and photographs, the mural celebrates historic institutions and people of the area. It was completed in 2013 with help from VISTA/AmeriCorps volunteers.

Doreyl also worked with Asheville officials to create "Golden Threads," which tells the story of the history of music and the area's musicians. The main panel is complemented by several others including "Shindig on the Green," an event that showcases mountain music.

Lake Lure | One of the most unusual additions to the trail, Flowering Bridge Living 3D Mural in Lake Lure, was created by Lake Lure artists Veryl Lynn Cox and Amy Wald in 2015. The Lake Lure Artists Club and community volunteers helped with the installation along the 350-foot garden trail in 2015, adding whimsical artwork and statuary among the 700 species of plants there.

Forest City | Forest City's original Downtown Mural was painted by Clive Hayes in 2000 at the request of city officials. It depicts a downtown streetscape, but when visitors look closely, they can spot hidden objects Hayes interspersed to add interest and a hide-and-seek element. The mural was restored in 2011.

Boone | Boone's post office is home to "Daniel Boone on a Hunting Trip," commissioned through a Federal Arts Project program that took place from 1935 to 1943. Part of the New Deal, the project created jobs for artists through the Works Progress Administration. Hundreds of works of art were created, but many have fallen into disrepair or been removed. Painted in 1940 by Alan Tomkins, the mural was restored in 2014 by David Goist. It's the only surviving WPA mural in northwestern North Carolina. The Appalachian Mural Trail is looking to place more New Deal murals on the trail.

West Jefferson | Unity in Diversity in West Jefferson was painted in 2006. The project was spearheaded by Winston-Salem artist Marianne DiNapoli-Mylet who enlisted students from Ashe Middle School to create a work that showed the diversity of the people who work and live there. It's a prime example of community support, funded by an Arts in Education Residency Grant from the North Carolina Arts Council, Handmade in America, the West



"Downtown Mural," Forest City

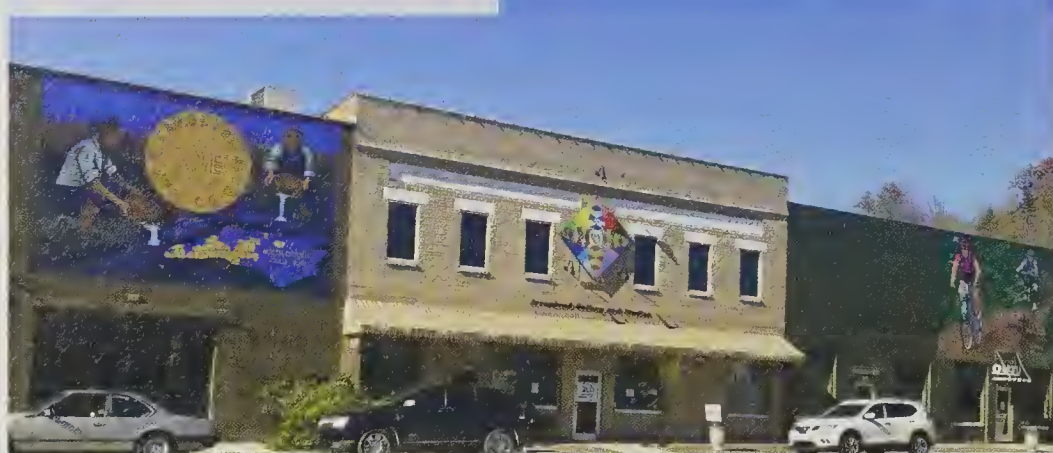


"Unity in Diversity,"
West Jefferson



"Victorian Antique Mall,"
Rutherfordton

"North Carolina Gold Trail," Old Fort



"The Trail Town," Elkin




Jefferson Community Partnership and the Ashe County Arts Council.

Elkin | Artist Michael Brown conceived "The Trail Town" mural for Elkin. Located at the confluence of the Yadkin River and Big Elkin Creek, the town's history reaches back to the Paleo-Indians 10,000 years ago. The mural traces various area trails and landmarks. It is highlighted on Elkin's Trail & Towns Excursions downtown walking tour brochure.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Doreyl and Jerry have begun two new projects: a mural trail in Virginia and a "Gateway Cities" initiative to draw visitors from major cities to the parkway and the mural trails. Appalachian Mural Trail works with governments, community organizations and private citizens. The work is funded through donations.

"Murals are art for the people," Doreyl says. "They tell the stories of average people, daily life, significant events, and those not so important. Murals are right there, in your face for all to see. They're historic, artistic and a way for people to celebrate the lives and times of their predecessors. Murals give artists a broad audience way beyond the people who see their works in galleries and museums, and they help bring people together to learn about the history and beauty around them." 

Pamela A. Keene is a freelance journalist who writes for magazines and newspapers across the Southeast and nationally.



The only surviving WPA mural in northwestern North Carolina, "Daniel Boone on a Hunting Trip," is on display in the downtown Boone post office.

MURALS IN YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS

In addition to the Appalachian Mural Trail, mural projects across the state speak of public pride. They tell stories on a grand scale, revealing history and culture no matter what language you speak. In North Carolina, the landscape of cities and towns is dotted with these freeze-frame moments depicted on sides of buildings, on college campuses and water towers. They mark significant events, reflect an area's character, and remind people of other times.

Here are just a few resource to help track down other pieces of public art across the state. List your own in the comments section for this article at carolinacountry.com!

Post Offices

During the time of the "New Deal" in the 1930s and 1940s, more than 40 murals were created in NC post offices to provide work for artists. Some were painted on canvas, others directly onto plaster walls, but each represents a slice of Americana.

wpamurals.com/ncarolin.htm

Charlotte

To celebrate and recognize murals in the Queen City, volunteer Hallie Gray has created a Facebook page of murals in and around the city. She posts murals that she knows about and encourages others to find them and post them as well.

facebook.com/charlottemurals

Greensboro & Raleigh

Both cities have organizations working to promote the preservation, restoration and creation of murals across their urban landscapes.

No Blank Walls:

greensborodra.org/no-blank-walls.html

The Raleigh Murals Project:

raleighmuralproject.wordpress.com

Durham

Mural Durham was created in late 2016 as an outgrowth of an arts festival at the Arts Annex at Duke's Campus and Burch Avenue. It's a chance for people to contribute to the creation of new murals and to help archive existing murals. Check the website for April events.

muraldurham.com

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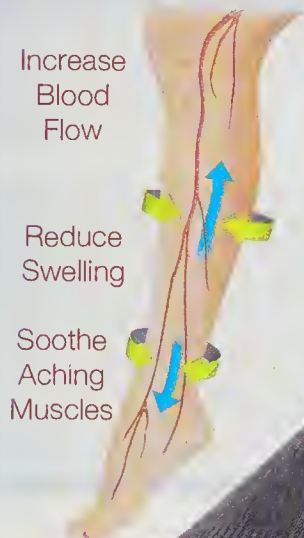


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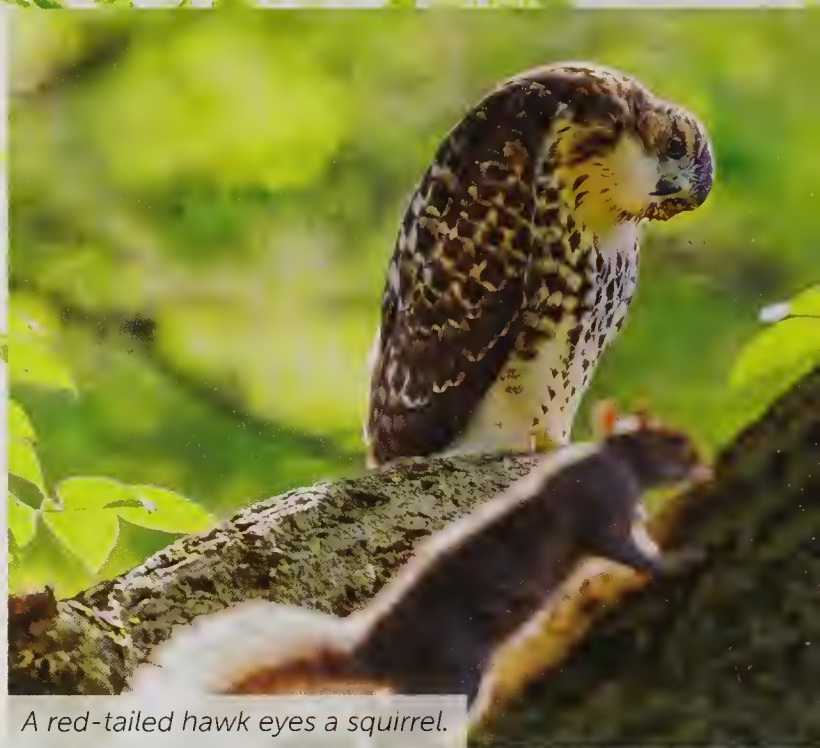
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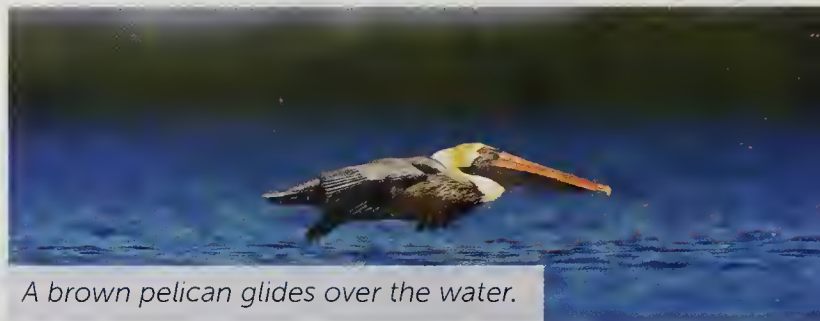
How to Become a BIRDER in Time for Spring

No need to fly elsewhere—
North Carolina is a birding paradise

By Gayle Gresham and Karen Olson House



A red-tailed hawk eyes a squirrel.



A brown pelican glides over the water.



Sylvan Heights Bird Park

Mandarin duck

Looking for your travel to take flight this year? Become a birder and enjoy all kinds of new places to visit. North Carolina is home to a diverse array of great birdwatching spots and natural habitats, and you have plenty of options to explore.

Spring is a wonderful time to watch birds—the males sport colorful plumage to attract mates, and their courtships can include nutty head dips and daring dives. Before you venture forth with your map, you can easily start your hobby by simply looking

out your window and seeing the birds that congregate in your yard. Is that a finch? What type of finch? (North Carolina has 11 recorded species.)

To find out, you can go old school by checking a field guide like Peterson's or Sibley's, or look up finches on allaboutbirds.org from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Or, download the Merlin Bird ID app to your smartphone. The app asks five questions to help identify a bird, then pulls up bird photos matching the description that has been seen in your region. Or, take a photo of the bird, upload it to Merlin and it will identify the bird for you.

Those who catch birdwatching fever often note down the birds they have seen or heard. A list can be kept in a journal or in a special birding notebook, or you can make simple notations of dates and places beside pictures in a guide book. Computer

list options include Birder's Diary software, which also allows photos, or the eBird mobile app for cellphones, which uses GPS coordinates for bird species sightings.

Birding across NC

Your interest in birds has been piqued, and now you'd like to see more birds. It's time to travel! Many migratory birds, including songbirds, fly to NC's mountains during April and May. Good birding spots along the Blue Ridge Parkway include Linville Gorge (Milepost 316.4); Great Craggy Mountains (MP 360-382); and Shining Rock (MP 420.2).

The barrier islands along the Outer Banks are stimulating places to bird. With more than 250 species to be found, birding is a year-round activity at Cape Lookout National Seashore. Birders also enjoy strolling the open woods at Weymouth Woods-Sandhill Nature Preserve in the Piedmont area



Ken Christison

A pair of tree swallows get into a tiff.



Ken Christison

Male American goldfinch



Ken Christison


A killdeer

throughout the year.

There are, of course, many more birding spots. The North Carolina Birding Trail (ncbirdingtrail.org) is a driving trail linking birders and tourists with great birding sites across the state and the local communities in which they are found. A wealth of information, including designated sites, can be found on its interactive website. There, you can view maps, search for sites by regions and learn more about additional NC birding resources. The Trail, a partnership project, also published a series of three spiral-bound trail guides for the coast, Piedmont and mountain regions in 2007–2009, along with digital versions (2009–2011). They cover 310 sites in all, and birders continue to find them quite helpful.

Finding companions

The Carolina Bird Club supports the birding community in the Carolinas

(carolinabirdclub.org) and holds meetings, workshops and trips. The Audubon Society also offers a range of events. North Carolina Audubon chapters include: Cape Fear Audubon Society, serving Brunswick, Pender and New Hanover counties; New Hope Audubon Society (Chatham, Durham, and Orange counties); and High Country Audubon Society (Avery, Ashe, Alleghany, Watauga, and Wilkes counties). To learn more about other chapters, call 919-929-3899 or visit nc.audubon.org. 

Information in this article was compiled by Gayle Gresham, who writes from her electric-co-op powered home in Elbert, Colorado, and Contributing Editor Karen Olson House.



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Sylvan Heights Bird Park

Military Macaw

Lady of Tradition

Lorraine Jordan is a bluegrass master helping the next generation

By Donna Campbell Smith

Lorraine Jordan—known as the “Lady of Tradition”—taught herself to play the guitar at an early age and got her start in bluegrass while still in high school. She was playing bass guitar with the West Craven High School Band at a school function when some local bluegrass musicians took notice of her. They invited her to join their jam sessions.

Eventually, Theodore and Hattie Morris, who hosted the jam sessions in their home, formed a band and toured bluegrass festivals, exposing Jordan to the country’s top bands. Her foot was in the door.

It was in the ’70s when Jordan heard a band called The Seldom Scene and fell in love with its traditional style of music. She decided to buy a mandolin and try some lead picking and singing. In 1984, she moved to Garner. By this time, Jordan knew she wanted to form her own band, develop her own style and write bluegrass music.

And she did just that. Her band, Lorraine Jordan and Carolina Road, is now one of the top bluegrass bands in the nation. No more camping out at the festivals. She now arrives in a big tour bus with her portrait painted on its sides.

Then the awards started. She won Recorded Event of the Year in 2006 and 2009 from the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA).



Jordan with the Garrett Newton Band at PreddyFest

In 2015, she did a recording project with 11 Grand Ole Opry stars titled “Country Grass.” Also in 2015, the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America awarded Jordan Bluegrass Traditional Vocalist of the Year and Song of the Year for “That’s Kentucky.” And in 2017, she performed on the Grand Ole Opry stage. She and her band now have two No. 1 songs on the national charts.

Helping fellow musicians

Jordan knows she was fortunate to have had help from some great folks in getting her music career going. Today, Jordan is paying it back by helping others. Two of her projects that stand out are the formation of the Daughters of Bluegrass and the launching of young Garrett Newton’s career.

Jordan got the idea for the Daughters of Bluegrass while she was on the road. She realized there was no project for an all-women musical group. She and her banjo player at the time, Gena Britt, called together 15 other female musicians and recorded an entire project with the female pickers and singers. In 2006 and 2009 they won national awards. There are now more than 200 Daughters of Bluegrass.

Garrett Newton is nothing short of a banjo phenom. The not-yet 18-year-old has led his Garrett Newton Band to become a finalist for an IBMA award, get a song on the national charts and sign with a national recording label.

“When I first met Garrett Newton, the first thing he told me was that he loved the traditional music my band played,” Jordan remembers. Then the young teen asked if she wanted to hear him play and ran off to get his banjo. Jordan was impressed by his talent and his knowledge of bluegrass music.




She made a deal with the young man: She’d let him tour with her and play one number at each concert if he’d work her band sales table. He accepted her offer.

Eventually Garrett asked Jordan to help him form his own band, so he could play more than one song per show.


“He knew exactly who he wanted in the band and gave me his list. It was quite impressive, and it even included me on bass guitar,” she said.

Dream job

Jordan recently fulfilled another dream of hers: to own a family-oriented place where folks can come to hear live bluegrass music. In 2014, the dream came true when she opened Lorraine’s Coffee House in Garner (lorrainescoffeehouse.com).

Young and old come to listen to big name bands and enjoy the family atmosphere. Jordan continues to give back. 

Donna Campbell Smith is a Carolina Country contributing writer who lives in Franklin County.

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Watch Lorraine Jordan perform the 2015 Song of the Year, “That’s Kentucky.”

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Growing Glory on a Vine

The glitzy, yet inexpensive Glory Lily

Story and photos by L.A. Jackson

Gloriosa superba “Rothchildiana” — If you can utter such a stretch of syllables six times without taking a breath, you’ve passed part of your yearly physical. Besides being an imprecise health check, this mouthful of words refers to a very pretty herbaceous perennial vine commonly called the glory lily. To break all the other jibber-jabber down, *Gloriosa superba* is the plant’s botanical name, while “Rothchildiana” is a particularly fancy-pants cultivar.

An African native, glory lily is grown in Carolina gardens from tubers that can be planted in late April. The ideal spot for this diva-in-the-dirt is a well-draining, organically rich, sunny site that fades to shade by the mid-to late afternoon. For more flower power, start monthly feedings of a low-nitrogen liquid fertilizer after planting. Also, at the end of May, add a 3-inch layer of mulch to help stabilize ground moisture.

Energized by the heat of a new growing season, the glory lily will rapidly grow. Using slim, unusual, 3-inch leaves that taper to coiling, grasping


tendrils, this vine (deer-resistant, by the way) can climb 6 to 7 feet up a support and branch out 3 to 4 feet wide.

Then, in midsummer, glory lily’s razzle really begins to dazzle. Slowly its blooms will unfurl, revealing wavy, reflexed, slender petals streaked in bright red and slashed by sharp yellow. Very impressive. And when bunches of these fabulous flowers flaunt all at once, it’s a show-stopper.

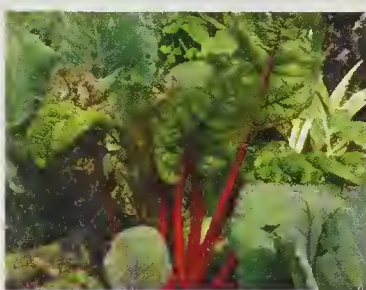
Although rated as a survivor only up to USDA Hardiness Zone 8, my garden-grown glory lily can’t read ratings and has come back from the coldest times three years running in the Raleigh area. This tropical vine will probably weather normal winters well in the NC Southeast, but, in spite of my plant’s persistence, from the Piedmont west, if you are concerned about its tendency to be tender, simply grow it in a 3-gallon or larger pot. Then, after the plant dies down in the fall, cut it back and tuck it away in a cool (around 60 degrees), dry haven until next spring.

As glitzy as glory lily seems, it is actually inexpensive and not hard to find.



This time of year, it can even be spotted in big box garden centers. And it is an easy online order. Terra Ceia Nursery (terraceiafarms.com) in Pantego not only e-offers “Rothchildiana” but a few other beautiful *Gloriosa* variations as well. 

L.A. Jackson is the former editor of Carolina Gardener magazine. Contact L.A. at lajackson1@gmail.com.



Garden To-Do's for April

If you are a fan of growing spinach and lettuce in the spring garden, try Swiss chard for a change. It takes summer heat better than most other spring greens, and, besides being pretty and especially nutritious, is a very versatile, tasty, easy-to-grow veggie. Both its stalks and leaves can be used raw in salads or cooked in soups, stews, pasta dishes, omelets, casseroles and more.

- ☐ The warm-season veggie garden can really get cranking with mid- to late April plantings of tomatoes, green beans, squash, cantaloupes, corn, cucumbers and watermelons.
- ☐ Counter cutworms from chomping tender annual seedlings down to the ground by knocking the bottoms out of paper cups and setting a cup around each

young plant like a collar, making sure the barrier is buried at least one inch in the ground.

- ☐ Aphids can be a problem for new foliage at this time of year, so check the undersides of fresh, developing leaves weekly for any signs of these pin-head-sized pests. A quick blast from the garden hose will easily shoo them away.

- ☐ Does new growth on your apple, blackberry, hawthorn, cotoneaster, pear, pyracantha or raspberry look burnt? Fire blight is the disease’s aptly descriptive name, and is best controlled by using pruners to cut the afflicted limbs off and then tossing them away. Keep the pruners clean by dipping them in a 10 percent bleach solution after every cut.

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Mowing with Electricity

By Hannah McKenzie

Q: I am considering purchasing an electric walk-behind lawn mower to reduce the hassle of maintaining my gas mower. Do they cost less to operate than gas lawn mowers? What are the pros and cons?

A: Batteries and motors have improved dramatically in recent years so electric mowers now easily compete with gas mowers. Personal preference, lawn size and your budget will determine which one is a good fit for your household.

There are three basic types of walk-behind lawn mowers: gasoline engine, battery-powered and electric power cord. Electric mowers emit a quiet whirr (you can now discreetly mow on Sunday mornings), and without an engine, the air is free of exhaust. Imagine only smelling freshly cut grass. Here are a few

considerations unique to electric lawn mowers (corded or cordless):

- **Maintenance.** Battery-powered mowers are quiet and need no annual maintenance aside from blade sharpening. However, after several years of use, they may need a replacement battery, which can cost approximately \$100.
- **Batteries.** Cordless mowers are similar to cordless drills...you pop the battery out of the device and into the charger, and you have to plan ahead for batteries to be ready for action. Look for a mower with a battery capacity that can handle

your lawn size without running out of juice. Some folks purchase an extra battery so they can cover more ground. Investigate how long it takes to charge batteries—some models take a few hours while others take half a day. Battery-powered mowers with the Energy Star® label will charge more efficiently than other models, and will use almost no electricity when plugged in but not actively charging.


■ **Cords.** Again, think of your power tool cords. Are cords too much trouble? What drop cords work best for you? Mowers have a very short cord so you will need to invest in a quality drop cord and be vigilant to avoid mowing it.

Comparing Mowers

	Gasoline engine	Battery-powered	Electric power cord
Ideal lawn size	Less than ½ acre		Less than ¼ acre
Cutting width	21 to 22 inches		
Upfront cost*	\$250	\$300 to \$500	\$200
Annual cost**	\$24	\$1.75	\$8.73
Pros	→ Unlimited mowing, just refill gas and keep going	→ Quiet → No engine so no gas, oil, spark plugs or filters → Can be folded and stored vertically in compact space	
Cons	→ Emissions → Loud → Routine maintenance of oil, spark plugs and filters	→ Battery life (may need to purchase spare or replacement battery for approximately \$100) → Lengthy charging times	→ Avoiding cutting cord with mower → Additional cost to purchase a drop cord

Other options

If no electric models suit your needs, look for mowers that meet the California Air Resources Board (CARB) standards. These mowers will produce 40 to 80 percent fewer air polluting particulates than other models. Another option is shrinking the size of your lawn.

Check out Consumer Reports online to see product comparisons, and make sure to consider consumer feedback because Average Joe may have a better grasp of what you may love or hate about a product. Happy mowing! 

*Costs are approximate. **Estimates for mowing half-acre 16 times per year with gas (\$2.30 per gallon) or electricity (12 cents per kilowatt-hour). Source: wisebread.com; annual costs modified to reflect average NC electric co-op rates.

Hannah McKenzie is a building science consultant for Advanced Energy in Raleigh.



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Managing a Renovation Contractor

By Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen

In our March column, we offered tips on how to hire a good contractor (“Hiring the Right Contractor,” page 44). But after the hiring is complete, there are a few steps you can take to manage them effectively.

First, you should decide who will be the main contact with your contractor. Clear communication is critical because a renovation that includes energy efficiency improvements comes with extra challenges. A single point of contact will help avoid confusion, conflicts and cost overruns.

Before the work starts, have a discussion with your contractor about quality. You want the contractor to know you’ll be carefully overseeing the work and that there may be others involved in this oversight, such as building inspectors, your electric cooperative or an independent energy auditor. You can discuss the standards of a professional, high-quality job. And you can agree on the points at which the contractor will pause so you or someone you designate can review the work. At a minimum, an inspection should take place before you make an interim payment.

Here are a few examples of interim review points:

- The building envelope should be properly sealed before insulation is installed because air leaks increase energy use and reduce comfort.
- Replacement windows should be properly flashed and sealed before siding and trim are installed, which prevents moisture problems and air leaks.
- Some insulation measures can be inspected before they are sealed up behind walls or ceilings.

During the project

It will be tempting to add “just one more thing” along the way, and the contractor may agree a change is simple and possible within the timeframes. Contractors and customers often miscommunicate about change orders and end up disagreeing about additional costs when the project is completed. Before you make any changes, be sure to get a written cost quote. If it’s significant, you can then weigh the cost against the benefit of the change.

It’s a good idea to maintain good records as the project progresses. These records could be helpful for building inspectors or to qualify for rebates or tax credits.

Reviewing work

Almost all efficiency measures require some kind of final inspection. For example, infrared thermometers can show



HVAC technicians or energy auditors can use diagnostic equipment to measure air leakage and air flow.

voids in blown insulation, and fiberglass batts can be visually inspected to ensure there are no air gaps and the batts are not compressed.


HVAC measures require special attention. Nearly half of all HVAC systems are not installed correctly, according to Energy Star®, which often causes uneven temperature distribution throughout the home, along with higher energy bills. Energy Star has a special program to ensure quality HVAC installation. Forced air systems typically have poorly balanced supply and return air delivery that can often be improved. Air flow can be measured at each register, and a duct blaster test can identify and quantify duct leakage.

When you review the work, it may be helpful to take photos or to bring in an energy auditor. Be sure to have these inspections outlined in the contract and discussed beforehand so the contractor is comfortable.

Before final payment

When the renovation is complete, it may be tempting to sign the check, shake hands and breathe a sigh of relief that it’s all over. Depending on the size and complexity of the project, it may be worth the extra step of having a final audit by a licensed energy auditor.

My neighbors were saved from a home renovation disaster when an energy audit discovered the energy efficiency contractor had failed to produce the promised efficiencies. The contractor had to perform thousands of dollars’ worth of improvements to fulfill the contract before my neighbors made the final payment.

Once you confirm that the work is 100 percent complete, you can write a check for the final payment, then sit back and enjoy your revitalized, more energy-efficient home! 

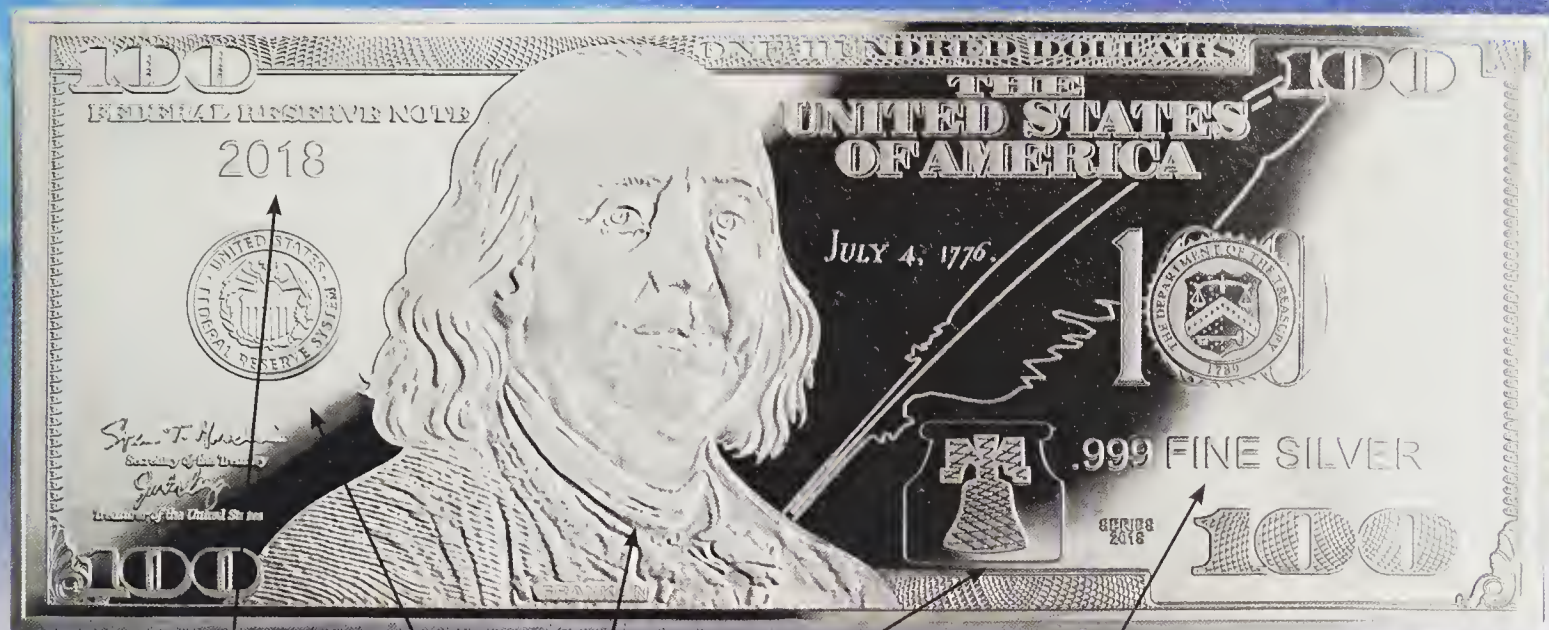
This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. Visit carolinacountry.com/your-energy for more ideas on energy efficiency.

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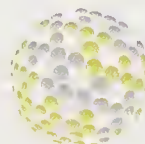
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Smartphone Savvy

5 hacks to ease travel stress

There are so many things to gain from traveling, including making new friends, seeing new sights and enjoying new experiences. But traveling can be stressful, too. For some, flying in particular has become more challenging than ever.

As you make your vacation plans, remember that one of your most helpful tools on a trip is your smartphone. Here are some tips to optimize your phone for your next adventure.

1 Maximize storage.

Cell phone cameras are more powerful than ever, and the average smartphone holds thousands of photos and videos of your cherished memories. You don't want to run out of storage space, so get the right MicroSD card for your phone before you depart. You can also set up cloud storage services so your pictures are automatically uploaded and secured.

2 Use travel apps.

Apps like FlightAware, Google Maps and LoungeBuddy can keep you apprised of gate and flight changes, estimate traffic and plot travel routes, and help you locate the best places to rest before your flight. There are even apps like SitOrSquat, for locating

nearby bathrooms. Download the ones you want before your trip.

3 Let accessories assist.

When you're playing the balancing act with your luggage, wallet and other travel gear, it's that much easier to drop your device. Keep your smartphone safe with a screen protector and a case that's sturdy and practical. Some cases have non-slip materials that make them easier to grip and include storage for credit cards. There are also collapsible phone grips that double as a built-in stand (one brand is PopSockets). They come in handy if you're watching a movie on the plane or in your hotel room.

4 Check your mobile plan.

Some mobile plans have designated perks for travelers. For example, T-Mobile One's plan is among options on the market that provides international travelers unlimited data and texting in many countries along

with flat-rate calling in others. That means no wasting time or money searching for public Wi-Fi or purchasing an international SIM card. If you are flying, check your plan beforehand for any costs of accessing internet or sending texts and picture messages in the air. Talk with your carrier before you leave, and mention you want to avoid overage fees. (As always with any plan, read the fine print and read reviews if you are considering switching.)

5 Bring your own entertainment.

There's always a chance your flight can get delayed. Download some shows and movies before your trip (especially key when traveling with kids) so you can watch when Wi-Fi is unavailable. You may want to find a few games that can be played offline, too. 📺

—StatePoint



Spring Cleansing

Freshen up your home using these tricks

Cleaning for the warmer months ahead is more than tidying up. It's an instinctual tradition that helps cleanse your spirit, shake off winter and begin afresh. Here are some tips from cleaning experts to get you started.


Let the light in

Put on some uplifting music, then clean off the grime on your windows. Mix up a natural solution of two parts white vinegar to one part water in a spray bottle. Fill a clean bucket or pot with cool water and add a couple of drops of dishwashing liquid. Dip a sponge or microfiber cloth in the

water and wipe down the window's surface, starting at the top. Wipe down the window frame and sill, too. Then spray the window thoroughly with your vinegar solution (or commercial product). Use a clean cloth towel, paper towel or some black-and-white newspaper pages to dry the window, using a z-shaped motion.

such as toys. Put trash in a garbage bag and future thrift store donations in a cardboard box.

Zoom with vacuum

Change any full bags first, and wipe down your vacuum and its attachments, if they need it. You can use a utility cloth to scrub the brush. Start to one side of a room, vacuum in an "M" pattern and work your way out of the room. (This pattern helps pick up dust and allergens and makes high-traffic areas less noticeable.) Use your attachments to clean baseboards. 

—Brandpoint

Appliance maintenance

Doing these tasks regularly can keep these home appliances running efficiently.

Dishwashers: Once a month, check and clean the drain and wipe down the door seals and spray arm.

Microwave: Clean the rotating microwave plate in the dishwasher each week. When needed, put a bowl of water with a few cut lemons in the microwave and run it for three minutes. Let it sit for five minutes before wiping down the inside.

Coffee maker: Hand-wash the filter tray, exposed areas and crevices weekly, and run water with a bit of vinegar through it to clean the inner mechanisms. (This will make your coffee taste better, too.)

Speed decluttering

It's often easier to clear a room for cleaning and dusting when you set a time limit. Select one room, and set a timer for 10 minutes. Fill a laundry basket with items that need to be returned to other parts of the house,

Capture fur, fight odors

If you have a dog or cat, thoroughly vacuum any furniture and pet bed that your pet uses. Arm & Hammer's Pet Fresh bags and filters are among products that help capture pet dander and allergens, while neutralizing offensive smells.

If you keep pet wipes at the door,

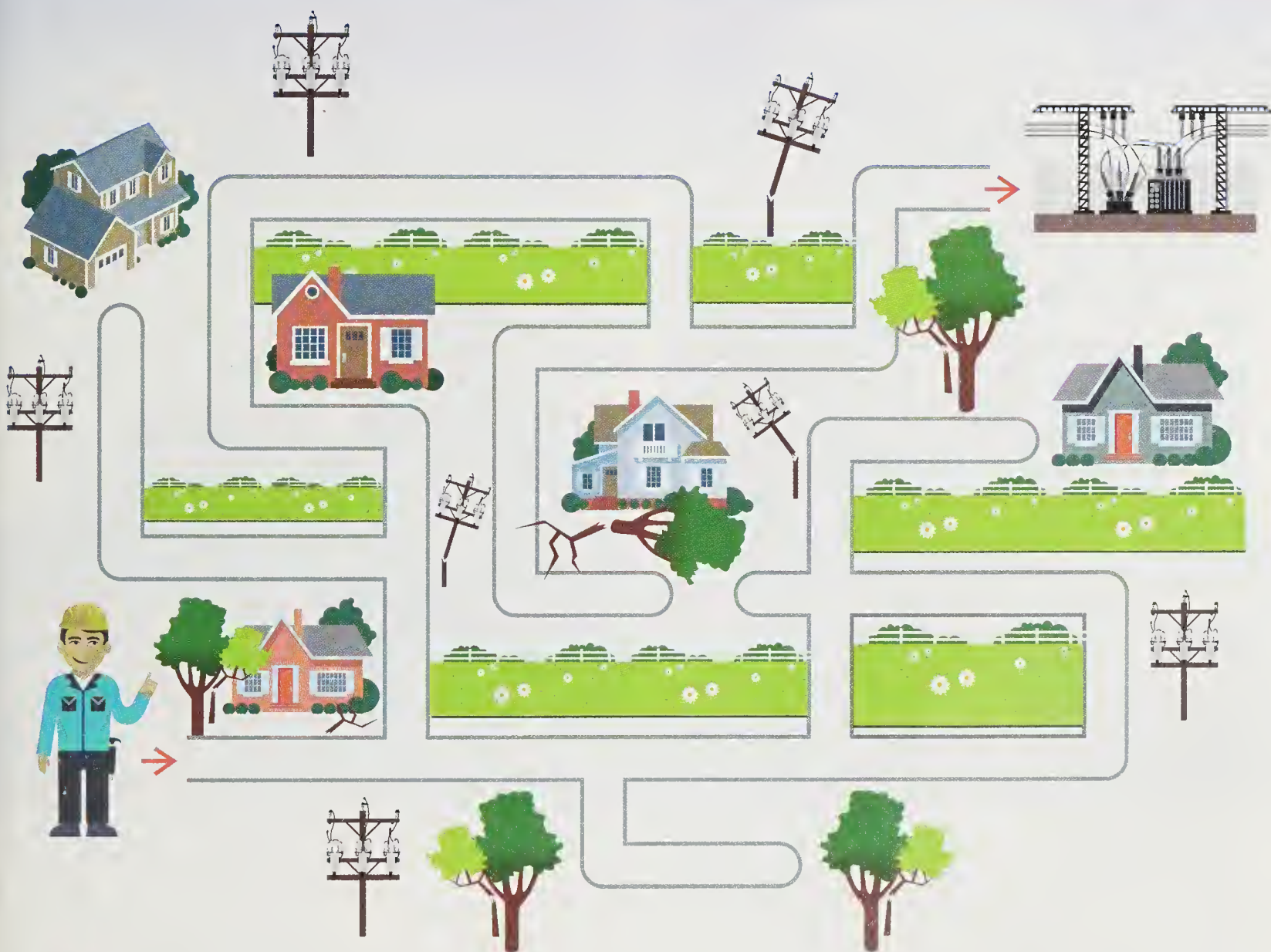
you can clean paws and stop mud in its tracks before it gets inside your home. Look for an all-natural product that will pick up dirt and moisturize paw pads at the same time. Also, stash a lint roller by the door to quickly remove pet fur from clothing as you step out the door.

The Lineworker & the Substation

Lineworkers work in dangerous conditions to restore electricity after major storms and other types of power outages. Many times, lineworkers make substation repairs to get the power back on.



Can you help this lineworker get to the substation?



NC Electric
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Drink to Your Health

Stir up wellness beverages for homemade goodness

Some people call them restorative drinks, others deem them wellness beverages. Whatever the name, the drinks are packed with flavor and good for you, too. They are meant to be sipped and enjoyed slowly (versus wellness shots or protein drinks knocked back on the way out the door).

While you can purchase ready-made concoctions at the grocery store, nothing beats a fresh, homemade drink. Here are three recipes from McCormick to try. 



Pineapple Mocktail with Muddled Greens

- 2 cups fresh pineapple chunks
- 2 tablespoons ginger, organic and crystallized
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon turmeric, ground
- 8 leaves of fresh dandelion greens* (washed, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces)
- Crushed ice
- 2 cups pink grapefruit soda

Place pineapple and ginger in a bowl. Muddle mixture by using the bottom of a heavy measuring cup to press the pineapple until it is crushed. Add turmeric, mix well.

Divide dandelion greens among four beverage glasses; muddle the greens gently

with a muddler or wooden spoon. Top each with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the pineapple mixture. Pack crushed ice into each glass. Top each with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grapefruit soda. Serve immediately.

Yield: 4 servings

*Dandelion greens? Yes, the weed. The bitter greens can be found in some produce sections. If you pick them yourself, avoid areas potentially treated with herbicide. The young, more tender leaves toward the inside have better flavor.

Nutrition information (per serving)

Total Fat: 0	Fiber: 1g
Saturated Fat: 0	Protein: 1g
Cholesterol: 0	Calories: 128
Sodium: 16mg	
Carbs: 31g	



Spiced Cucumber & Apple Juice Booster

- 4 clementines, divided
- 3 cups coarsely chopped seedless cucumber, plus additional slices for garnish
- 2 cups coarsely chopped Granny Smith apple
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon red pepper, ground
- 1 cup ice cubes

Juice two of the clementines, then peel the remaining two. Place juice and peeled clementines in a blender.

Add the cucumber, apple, ground red pepper and ice cubes to the blender. Cover and blend on high speed until pureed.

Pour into beverage glasses. Garnish with cucumber slices, if desired.

Yield: 4 servings

Nutrition information (per serving)

Total Fat: 0	Carbs: 18g
Saturated Fat: 0	Fiber: 4g
Cholesterol: 0	Protein: 2g
Sodium: 3 mg	Calories: 80



Ginger, Turmeric & Beet Elixir

- 1 cup fruit juice, such as passion fruit or mango
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unfiltered cider vinegar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cut beet juice
- 4 hibiscus tea bags
- 2 tablespoons ginger, ground
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon organic cardamom, ground
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon turmeric, ground

Stir all ingredients in pitcher, beverage container or large liquid measuring cup until

well blended. Cover.

Refrigerate overnight to extract flavor from hibiscus tea bags. Remove and squeeze tea bags dry, releasing liquid into elixir. Discard tea bags.

Stir elixir right before serving. Pour into small beverage glasses.

Yield: 6 (2-ounce) servings

Nutrition information (per serving)

Total Fat: 0	Carbs: 8g
Saturated Fat: 0	Fiber: 0
Cholesterol: 0	Protein: 1g
Sodium: 11mg	Calories: 36



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*Monday - Friday, 8am - 5pm

WHAT OUR LANDOWNERS HAVE TO SAY

"Outdoor Access allows me to share my property with people. The members have all been really nice people. They have been very respectful of me and my neighbors."

Outdoor Access is a great way to meet and share with other people, and to me, that's important to do."

-Jim L. Loudoun County, VA



Tar Heel Tidbits

For the young (and young at heart)



Karen Swain NCMNS

A-Mazing Brain Games

A feature exhibition at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences in downtown Raleigh is encouraging visitors to put their brains to the test via mind-boggling adventures, 3D puzzles and full-body games. The exhibit winds its way over 6,500 square feet, with more than 60 experiences that inspire exploration and ingenuity.

You can test your perceptions and laugh your way through the maze of illusions (a feast of visual trickery) or become a “webmaster” by climbing through an intricate network of ropes. Or get lost in the Color Maze and experiment with light, shadow and fluorescence in the black-lit Cosmic Games room.



Karen Swain NCMNS

“Mazes & Brain Games” runs through September 3. Exhibition hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday (last entry at 4 p.m.). Tickets are free for museum members or \$5 per person (ages three and up). You can get them at the museum’s box office (919-707-9950) or online at naturalsciences.org.

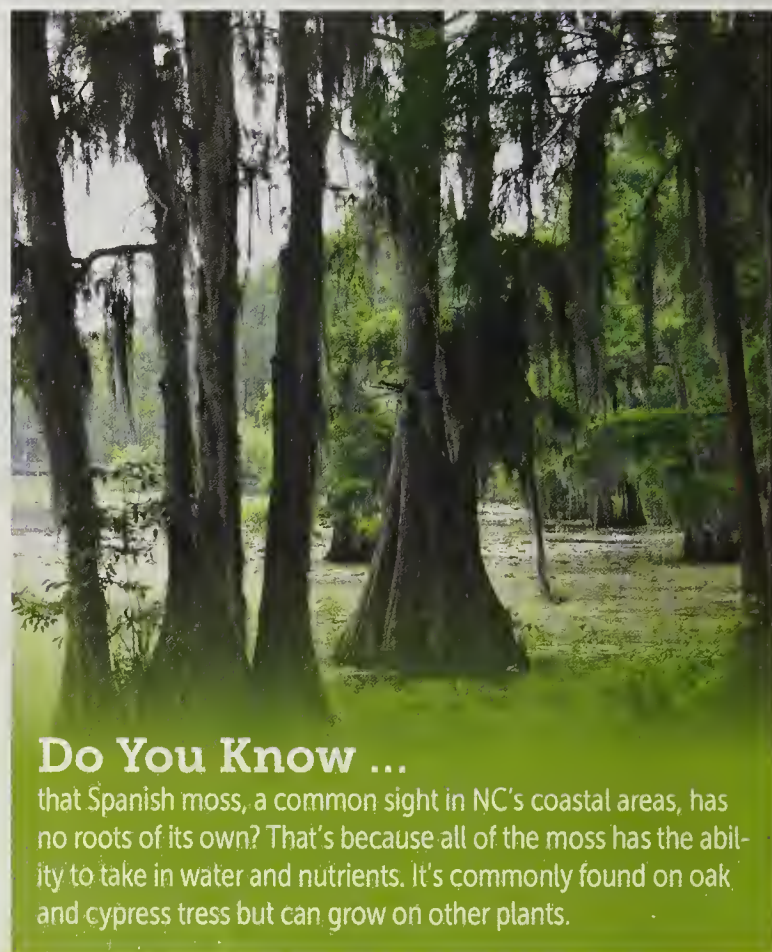


A GOOD READ

Hey, Coach!

This rhyming picture book for ages three and up captures the energy and fun of young children playing on the soccer field. Over the course of their first season, the players progress from unsure newcomers to spirited good sports who love the game (and even manage to score).

Author Linda Ashman, who lives in Chapel Hill, tells the story through the kids’ own voices, using speech bubbles instead of narration. Her appreciation for the patient work that volunteer coaches do comes through, along with her sense of humor about early athletic pursuits. Illustrated by Kim Smith; Sterling Publishing. Hardcover, 32 pages, \$11.27 at barnesandnoble.com.



Do You Know ...

that Spanish moss, a common sight in NC’s coastal areas, has no roots of its own? That’s because all of the moss has the ability to take in water and nutrients. It’s commonly found on oak and cypress trees but can grow on other plants.

FUN FOOD

Space Exploration Bento Box

Recipe courtesy of Produce for Kids

This lunch is out-of-this-world! Your children can create the star shapes using a cookie cutter. For additional kid-friendly meal ideas, visit poweryourlunchbox.com.

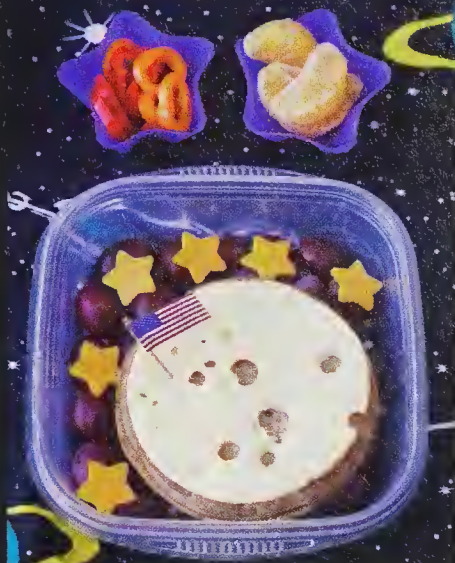
- ½ cup red seedless grapes
- 1 whole-wheat sandwich round
- 2 slices low-sodium deli-sliced turkey
- 1 slice Swiss cheese
- ½ slice low-fat cheddar cheese
- 1 clementine, peeled and segmented
- 3 mini sweet peppers, sliced into rings
- 1 package freeze-dried fruit

Add grapes to bottom of large section of bento box to create space background. Place bottom of sandwich round on top, add turkey and sandwich round top.

Lay Swiss cheese on cutting board. Using small bowl or other round object, cut into circle. Place on top of sandwich to create moon.

Lay cheddar cheese on cutting board. Using a small star cookie cutter, cut out stars. Add to space around moon.

Pair with clementine "crescent moons," pepper "planet rings" and freeze-dried fruit.



I Want My Veggies

What? You never hear that at your house? Well, sometimes a kid needs to grow vegetables to want to eat them. The Captain Planet Foundation knows this, and its Project Learning Garden initiative helps students learn about food and nature through hands-on school gardens. Emma Elementary in Asheville is the first NC school to get a grant through the program.

Last fall, its students munched on lettuce and made salad dressing to celebrate their garden's opening. This spring, they will be happily getting their hands dirty again. Other schools are welcome to apply! To learn more about the program, visit www.captainplanetfoundation.org.



Have a laugh!

Q: Why are frogs so happy?

A: They eat whatever bugs them.



Calling All Swashbucklers and Mermaids

Yo ho ho! This year's PirateFest, held annually in Greenville, is set for Friday and Saturday, April 13–14. Activities include live music, a "grog garden," mermaids, pirate entertainers, a parade, children's costume contest, and an encampment with an inflatable pirate ship for lads and lassies. There's also a fossil dig, kayak rides, carnival rides, fine arts and crafts and a variety of food. To find out more, call 252-561-8400 or visit piratefestnc.com.

April events



Burnsville Metric
April 28, Burnsville

MOUNTAINS

Easter Sunrise Service
Scripture, spiritual music
April 1, Chimney Rock
800-277-9611
chimneyrockpark.com

Lincoln Festival
Arts, crafts, heritage area
April 7, Bostic
828-245-9800
bosticlincolncenter.com

Trout Derby
Prizes, kids activities
April 7, Blowing Rock
828-295-4636
blowingrock.com

Ballad singing workshop
Work songs of the South
April 12, Blowing Rock
828-295-9099
blowingrock.com

Poetry & Stories
With Ron Houchin
April 14, Sparta
770-309-3611
allwrite2017@gmail.com

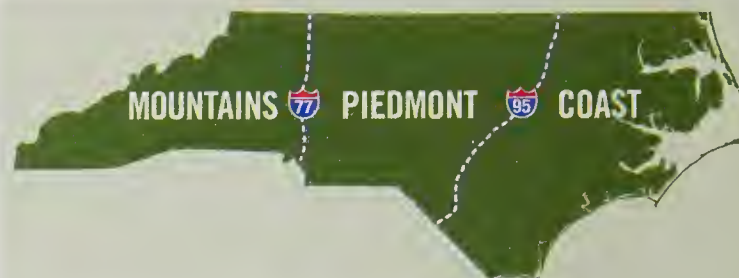
Wine Walk
Tastings, shopping
April 14, Statesville
704-878-3436
downtownstatesvillenc.org/wine-walk

Spring Wildflowers
Moderate hike
April 14, Chimney Rock
800-277-9611
chimneyrockpark.com

After Coal
Movies at the Museum series
April 19, Blowing Rock
828-295-9099
blowingrockmuseum.org

The Midtown Men
Hits from the 1960s
April 21, Franklin
866-273-4615
greatmountainmusic.com

Earth Day
Learn about conservation
April 21, Chimney Rock
800-277-9611
chimneyrockpark.com



Listing Deadlines: For June: April 25
For July: May 25
Submit Listings Online:
carolinacountry.com/calendar
(No email or U.S. Mail.)



carolinacountry.com/calendar

See more events online with photos, descriptions, maps and directions.

Cider, Wine & Dine

Food trucks, live music
April 20–22, Hendersonville
800-828-4244
visithendersonvillenc.org

Coffee with the Curator

April 24, Blowing Rock
828-295-9099
blowingrockmuseum.org

Art Crawl

April 27, Statesville
704-878-3436
downtownstatesvillenc.org

Popovich: Comedy Pet Theater

Critter stunts, skills
April 28, Franklin
866-273-4615
greatmountainmusic.com

Burnsville Metric

Kick-off for cycling season
April 28, Burnsville
828-682-7413
yanceychamber.com

Mountain Thunder Car Show

Fundraiser for local charities
April 28, Old Fort
828-442-8435
mopars4reel@yahoo.com

ONGOING

Art in the Hall

Derrick Chalfant's paintings
April 2 through May 25, Morganton
828-438-5362
morgantonnc.gov

Spring Awakening

Benefit art exhibition
April 7–23, Asheville
828-253-7651
grovewood.com

PIEDMONT

Old Time Fiddlers Convention

April 6–7, Dobson
336-957-3545
surryoldtime.com

The Charlie Daniels Band & The Marshall Tucker Band

Southern rock
April 7, Fayetteville
910-438-4100
crowncomplexnc.com

Nu-Blu

Four-piece bluegrass band
April 7, Liberty
336-622-3844
thelibraryshowcase.com



Trout Derby
April 7, Blowing Rock



Library Book Sale
April 12-14, Roxboro
336-597-7881
personcounty.net

All American Tattoo Convention
Artists, aerial performers
April 13-15, Fayetteville
910-850-2566
allamericantattooconvention.com

AsONE Prayer Walk
Unity stroll, music
April 14, Fayetteville
910-703-7504
asoneprayerwalk.org

Plant Sale
Master gardener fundraiser
April 20-22, Clemmons
336-703-2850
teresalowry65@gmail.com

Dancing with Fayetteville Stars
Dinner, fancy footwork
April 21, Spring Lake
910-323-3377
ncceed.org/fundraiser



Know Before You Go

In case something changes after Carolina Country goes to press, check information from the contact listed.

Ben Jones
Plus "Cooter's" garage band
April 21, Liberty
336-622-3844
thelibraryshowcase.com

Clenny Creek Day
Kids activities, vendors
April 21, Carthage
910-692-2051
moorehistory.com

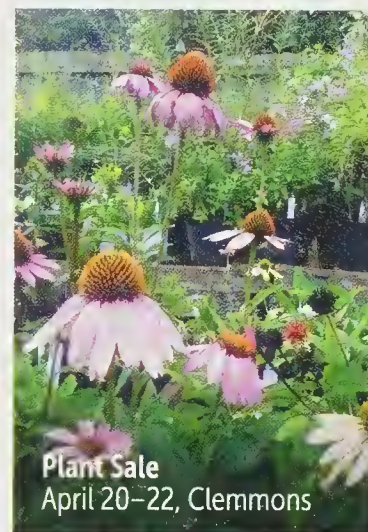
History Alive: Open House
Carriage rides, music
April 21, Bailey
252-235-4165
countrydoctormuseum.org

Nature's Way Storytelling
Storytellers honor Earth Day
April 21, Charlotte
509-460-9279
ncstoryguild.org

An Afternoon at Retreat
Demos, lectures
April 21, Sanford
910-947-2051
nchistoricsites.org/horsesho

Broadway Our Way
Street fair, BBQ contest
April 21, Broadway
919-258-9922
broadwaync.com

Celebration of Spring
Studio tours, music
April 21-22, Seagrove
336-707-9124
discoverseagrove.com



Chetola Resort

AT BLOWING ROCK

Sweepstakes

Carolina Country is partnering with Chetola Resort at Blowing Rock to offer a random drawing for a weekend getaway package that includes:

- A two-night stay in the Bob Timberlake Inn
- Breakfast for two each day
- Dinner at Timberlake's Restaurant (\$100 credit)
- One 60-minute couple's massage at The Spa

The 87-acre Chetola Resort is within walking distance of Blowing Rock in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina.

Visit carolinacountry.com/chetola
by April 30 to enter the random drawing.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter, complete online entry form at carolinacountry.com/chetola for a chance to win. All contact information will remain confidential. One entry per person, drawn by random; odds of receiving the one (1) 2-night weekend stay resort package (estimated retail value of \$1,500) depend upon number of entries received. Booking exclusions apply and reservations are subject to space availability. Offer expires March 31, 2019. Entries must be completed online at carolinacountry.com/chetola by April 30, 2018.

Dogwood Festival

Street fair, live entertainment
April 26–29, Fayetteville
910-323-1934
faydogwoodfestival.com

We Sing to Experience

Cumberland Oratorio Singers
April 27, Fayetteville
910-630-7153
singwithcos.org



Dogwood Festival
April 26–29, Fayetteville

Antiques Festival

April 27–28, Liberty
800-626-2672
libertyantiquesfestival.com

Military Vehicle & Gun Show

April 27–29, Denton
336-859-2755
dentonfarmpark.com

Springfest

Games, crafts, rides
April 28, Southern Pines
910-315-6508
southernpines.biz

Festival Fundraiser

Music, silent auction
April 28, Matthews
704-847-8383
matthewshelpcenter.org

Food, Wine and Brew Fest

April 28, Lincoln
704-960-8300
lincolntonfoodwinebrewfest.com



There are more than 250 farmers markets in North Carolina. For one near you, visit bit.ly/NCfarmmarkets.

Steeplechase

Racing thoroughbreds
April 28, Mineral Springs
704-843-7070
queenscup.org

ONGOING

Antigone

About loyalty, civil disobedience
April 6–22, Fayetteville
910-678-7186
gilberttheater.com

Sense & Sensibility

Adaptation of Austen classic
April 12–29, Fayetteville
910-323-4233
cftrt.org

Trees by Three

Paintings, glass art, wood
April 23–May 20, Hillsborough
919-732-5001
hillsboroughgallery.com

COAST

Spring Market

Handmade, homemade items
April 5, Sunset Beach
910-370-1373
thepuremarkets.com

Iron "Eagle" Chef

Chef competition
April 12, Washington
252-975-1138
eagles-wings.org

Walk to Defeat ALS

Care services fundraiser
April 14, Greenville
919-390-0121
web.alsa.org

Homes & Gardens Tour

April 14, Washington
252-946-6896
littlewashingtontnc.com

Boogie on Broad

Dancing to the Catalinas
April 20, Edenton
252-333-0655
mainstreetedenton.com



Easels in the Gardens
April 20–21, Edenton

Parker String Quartet

April 20, Oriental
252-617-2125
pamlicomusic.org

Easels in the Gardens

Art, music
April 20–21, Edenton
252-482-7800
ehcnc.org

Waterfowl Festival

April 21, Ocracoke Island
252-928-6711
visitocracokenc.com

Homes & Gardens Tour

April 21, Oriental
252-249-3340
museum@dockline.net

Lighthouse Run/Walk

April 21, Oak Island
910-457-6964
oakislandlighthousewalk.com

Porch & Art Stroll

Food, music
April 21, Shallotte
910-398-5136
woodsongporchandartstroll.com

Riverbash

Heritage celebration
April 27–28, Hertford
252-426-5657
perquimansriverbash.com

Tiny House Street Festival

Display of homes
April 27–29, Pink Hill
757-359-9095
tinyhousestreetfestival.com

Pickle Festival

Contests, derby
April 28, Mount Olive
919-658-3113
ncpicklefest.org

Plant Swap

April 28, Havelock
252-444-6400
havelocknc.us

Master Gardeners Spring Show

Plant sales, speakers
April 28, Hertford
252-482-6585
perquimans.ces.ncsu.edu

Days at the Dock Festival

Bopple race, live music
April 28–29, Holden Beach
910-523-8523
ncbrunswick.com/events

The 3 Redneck Tenors

Musical comedy
April 30, Washington
252-974-2076
gobcca.org

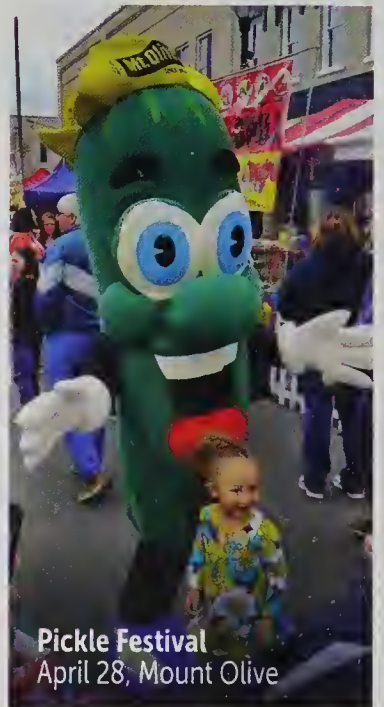
ONGOING

Gallery Walks

First Friday of month, Southport
910-457-1129
ncbrunswick.com/events

Anne of Green Gables

Orphan girl's adventures
April 13–22, New Bern
252-633-3318
rivertowneplayers.org



Pickle Festival
April 28, Mount Olive

Where in Carolina Country is this?

Send your answer by Friday, April 6, with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

Online: carolinacountry.com/where

By mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

Multiple entries from the same person will be disqualified.

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our May issue, will receive \$25.

Have a roadside gem you'd like to share?

Submit a photo, plus a brief description and general location information, at carolinacountry.com/where.



March winner

The March Where Is This photo from Piedmont Electric member Gwen Barber features the Person County Courthouse in Roxboro. Usually, government buildings are not picturesque, but Barber said a storm at sunset provided a sun glow behind the 88-year-old courthouse, giving the illusion that the building was on fire. The winning entry chosen at random from all the correct submissions came from Kimberly Tuck of Roxboro, a Piedmont Electric member.



CAROLINA COUNTRY scenes photo of the month

The White Ibis Spectacular

Every April, Southport experiences one of the great spectacles of the Eastern coastline: more than 10,000 pairs of White Ibis birds fly over in huge flocks and descend on Battery Island across the Cape Fear River from this historic town.

*Ann Orsillo, Southport
A member of Brunswick EMC*

The Photo of the Month comes from those who scored an honorable mention from the judges in our 2018 photo contest ("Carolina Country Scenes," January 2018). See even more Photos of the Week on our website carolinacountry.com.






2018 CAROLINA COUNTRY ADVENTURES

So many reasons to hit the road

It's OK to admit it—we're lucky to call North Carolina home.

In this year's annual travel guide, we're highlighting a few of the destinations around the state that prove it has a little something for everyone. Some of the spots featured in our guide are great for families, others offer a little romance. A few might be for the more adventurous among us, and many can guarantee a good time without breaking the bank.

We also recently posed a question to readers to help pass the time on those long car trips: What's your favorite roadside attraction? It turns out there are quite a few gems in NC. Read more on page 42.

As you explore our travel guide and all that NC has to offer, rest assured you're never far from an electric co-op. Thank you to North Carolina's electric cooperatives for sponsoring this guide, as well as to the advertisers listed on pages 43, 47 and 51. 

Brought to you by



This supplement to Carolina Country is brought to you by North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives. Twenty-six local electric cooperatives, as well as a family of support organizations, make up the network of electric cooperatives that collectively serve 1 million homes and businesses in 93 North Carolina counties from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Outer Banks. Each electric cooperative is not-for-profit, independent and owned by the local members it serves.



Destinations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>➤ Your Favorite Roadside Attractions
 <i>Top picks from our readers</i> 42</p> <p>1 A Ride on the Beach
 <i>Outer Banks by horseback.</i> 44</p> <p>2 Dive into Maritime History
 <i>Historical wreck diving.</i> 45</p> <p>3 Nature and History in Harmony
 <i>Pettigrew State Park and Somerset Place</i> 46</p> <p>4 Dinner on the Farm
 <i>Literal farm-to-table dining in the Piedmont</i> 48</p> | <p>5 The Seagrove Experience
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 <i>Vintage toys showcased in Spencer.</i> 50</p> <p>7 A Spirited Foothills Town
 <i>From wine to live music in Elkin</i> 52</p> <p>8 Family Adventure Under the Stars
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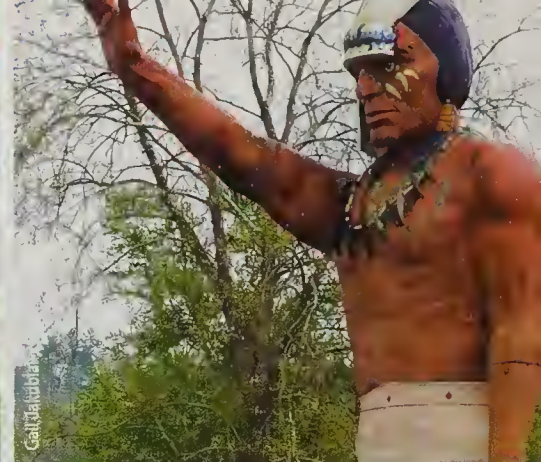
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Your Favorite Roadside Attractions

One of the best parts of a road trip is the unexpected gems you find along the way—and North Carolina is teeming with them. We asked our readers to share their favorites, so take their recommendations to heart and keep your eyes peeled on your next drive. We also included some tried-and-true stops from roadsideamerica.com.



1 Sunset Beach Park Sunset Beach

This little jewel tucked away under the live oaks sits on the Intercoastal waterway. It hosts lovely swings and walking paths overlooking the marsh. You might even see a little fishing boat testing the water.

Wanda Jackson, Star
A member of Randolph EMC

2 Big Blackbeard Statue Beaufort, Hwy 70

3 Civil War Ironclad Replica Plymouth, W Water Street

4 Rock Garden of America Littleton

This one is hard to spot in a person's yard, and we did pass it at first. This is my daughter Bethany Neary enjoying this attraction.

Karen Beikirch, Statesville
A member of EnergyUnited

carolinacountry.com/roadside
There's more to see out there not listed here! Use our online comments section to list your favorites.

5 Largest (Real) Tire Bladenboro, Hwy 131 N

6 Clamshell Shell Winston-Salem, E Sprague Street

This clamshell-shaped Shell service station was built in the 1930s, and in 1976 was added to the National Register of Historic Places. It is the last remaining clamshell station out of eight in this area. It's a short detour from I-40 and near Kermit's Hot Dog House!

Ashley Johnston, North Wilkesboro

7 Dinosaur Skeleton Sculptures Pikeville, Hwy 581

8 Cascade Falls Blue Ridge Parkway, Milepost 272.5

Approach the Blue Ridge Parkway turnoff to E.B. Jeffress Park and gaze upon a magnificent, expansive view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. A trail to the left takes you on a gradual descent through a deeply forested greenway, trees taller than three stories high, skirted by rhododendrons and other native plants. In no time you're face-to-face with Cascade Falls, a broad waterway that tumbles over massive rock formations. You'll never forget this experience!

Amy Millette, Vilas
A member of Blue Ridge Energy

9 American Indian Statue Cherokee, Paint Town Road

This statue has been standing there for at least three decades and stands on a drum. His headdress is half missing now.

Paul Jakubiak, Murphy
A member of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC

10 World's Largest Strawberry Ellerbe, Cargo Road

11 Dale Earnhardt Statue Kannapolis, S Main Street

12 Shoe House Lincolnton, Hwy 182

13 House of Mugs/Cup House Collettsville, Old Johns River Road

14 Occoneechee Trapper's Lodge Garysburg, 10 miles off I-95

This was definitely our favorite roadside attraction on our trip to visit our daughter in eastern NC. You could spend hours looking at this lodge! This is me looking out from this amazing cabin! Folk art at it's finest.

Karen Beikirch, Statesville
A member of EnergyUnited



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A happy rider nuzzles a new friend.

A Ride on the Beach

Saddle up and see the Outer Banks from a new perspective

By Scott Gates

What is it about a horse on a beach? Countless films have relied on the romantic image of a couple galloping side by side through the surf, and who can forget the iconic images of a boy and a horse bonding on a remote beach in the 1979 film "The Black Stallion."

For visitors to North Carolina's Outer Banks, riding through the surf isn't just for the big screen. Several stables offer rides along sandy beaches and through maritime forests. Many cater to children and riders with special needs, and all are fully equipped for a romantic experience with that special someone.

"We have taken out honeymooners and newlyweds, but my favorite story is of an engagement we helped set up," says Charlie Edwards, owner of Charlie Horse Stables on Ocracoke Island. "We recommended a photographer and made sure we didn't book anyone else for that ride, so it was an exclusive and private experience for the couple."

She said yes, by the way.

Plan ahead by finding the location right for you and booking in advance.

BYOH: Driftwood Ranch

Care to bring your own horse to the beach? Driftwood Ranch on Hatteras Island offers short-term, self-care boarding with trail access to wide beaches through maritime forest. bit.ly/driftwoodranch

Although some operate year-round, others may not be available for rides during winter months. Stables are listed south to north along the coast.

Cedar Island Stables

Though not on the Outer Banks, these stables—a part of Cedar Island Resort—offer a unique riding experience along the Pamlico Sound year-round, where riders may spot the wild horses that call the area home. Options include a sunset ride and a longer ride across a creek to an uninhabited island.

cedarislandresort.com | 252-515-0201

Charlie Horse Stables

Evening and morning rides (including the "Sunrise Special") are available on Ocracoke Island during summer months along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. During the off-season, owner Charlie Edwards and her horses live in Madison County, Virginia, where she is a 9th grade teacher.

charliehorsestablesnc.com | 703-650-8007

Hatteras Island Horseback Riding

Views of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, Ocracoke Island, the Atlantic Ocean and Pamlico Sound make this a

memorable ride. Owners Jeff and Suzie Scholten take pride in accommodating all riders, having taken 80-year-old grandmothers, wheelchair-bound paraplegics, children with medical conditions and Down syndrome, cancer patients and riders with multiple sclerosis.

hatterasislandhorsebackriding.com | 252-216-9191

Equine Adventures

Two-hour beach rides are available in Frisco year-round. The guided rides begin on a trail through maritime forest that opens onto the beach with views of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse.

Owner Sylvia Mattingly's barn sits on eight acres about two miles from the beach.

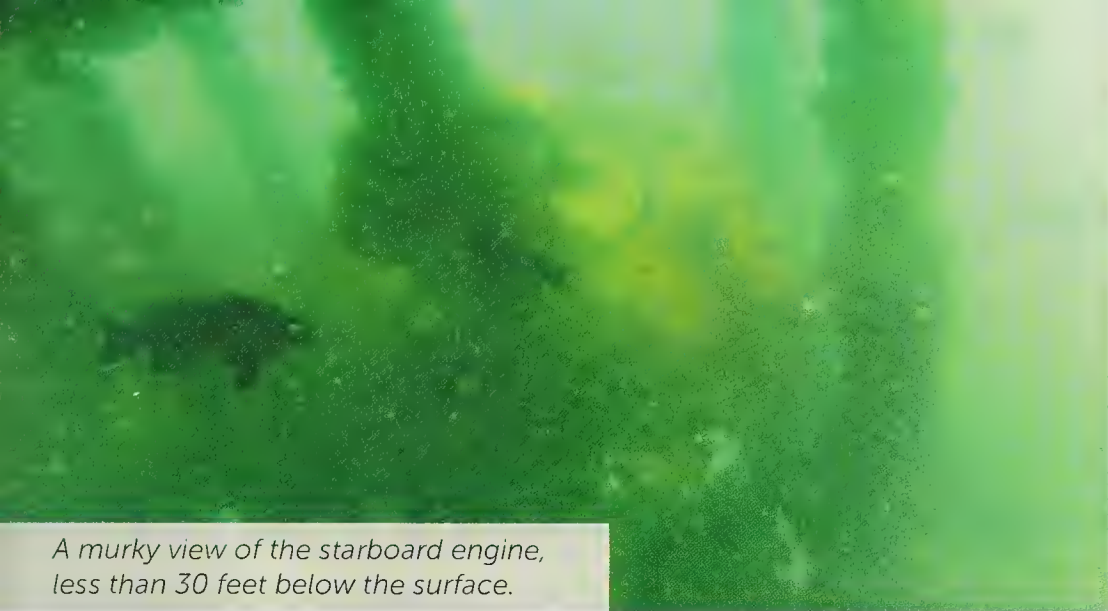
equineadventures.com | 252-995-4897

Lighthouse Horse Rides

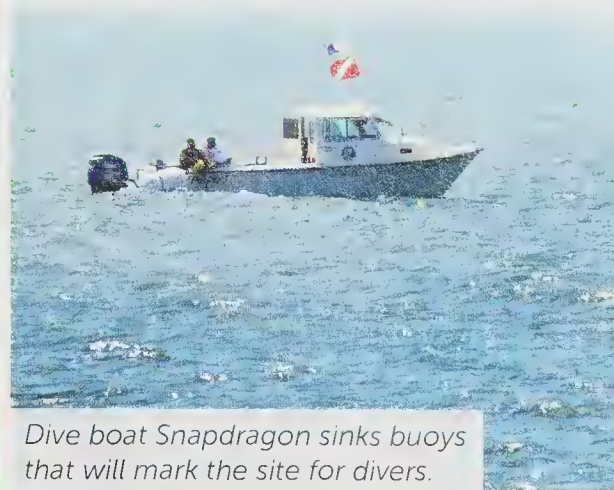
Novice and advanced riders alike travel to Marina Lobas' stables in Buxton, operating full-time since 2012. For those unable to ride a horse, Lobas provides something a little different: cart rides. "I want people with disabilities to be able to enjoy this kind of experience," she says. Rides are available year-round.

lighthousehorserides.com | 252-296-2929





A murky view of the starboard engine, less than 30 feet below the surface.



Dive boat Snapdragon sinks buoys that will mark the site for divers.

Dive into Maritime History

Visit a blockade runner where she's rested for 150 years

By Michele Walker | Photos courtesy of NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

There are nearly 5,000 shipwrecks off the coast of North Carolina—there's a reason our coast is known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic." These sunken treasures provide a unique view of our state's maritime history. What better way to preserve and honor that history than by creating an underwater museum?

Last summer, the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources dedicated its first Heritage Dive Site, the wreck of the Civil War blockade runner *Condor*, just off the coast of Fort Fisher. It's a unique in-sea museum waiting for divers to explore.

Fateful voyage

A little more than 150 years ago, the *Condor* sailed for Wilmington on her maiden voyage with her cargo and an illustrious passenger, Confederate spy Rose O'Neal Greenhow. Steaming through a line of Union Navy vessels blockading the port of Wilmington, the *Condor* ran aground and sank on the night of October 1, 1864.

Fearing capture and possible execution by Union leaders, Greenhow insisted on being rowed ashore, despite the vehement protests of the ship's officers. A volunteer small-boat crew finally attempted to row her ashore, but rough seas and breaking waves capsized the boat, and she drowned. She is buried in Oakdale Cemetery in Wilmington.

A shallow resting place

The *Condor* rests in about 25 feet of water, roughly 700 yards off the beach in front of the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. The almost-complete 218-foot-long wreckage is easily accessible by snorkelers or divers.

The site sits in a relatively shallow, rocky bed, and the main structure of the wreck is only 21 feet below the water surface, while parts of her machinery are only 13 feet below. This would normally mark the site with a beginner's rating. However, the sometimes-murky water in the near-shore area, along with the 150-year-old iron that divers encounter on the wreckage, makes this site a slight step above beginner.

The *Condor* has been fully mapped and marked with directional signs so that divers can easily find the vessel's full lower hull, engines, paddle wheels and boilers, which are all still in place. Dive slates have been created for the site, which provide divers with the ability to take a self-guided tour around the complete wreck. The slates are currently available from the Underwater Archaeology Branch (bit.ly/NCR-underwater), located in Kure Beach.

The site is open for divers from June through November, and is marked with surface buoys, travel lines and feature tags.

Diving history

The *Condor* is the first step in a planned Heritage Dive Trail to help the public explore other North Carolina shipwrecks. The next Heritage Dive Site might also be in the Kure Beach area—the wreckage of the USS *Peterhoff*, a British vessel seized by the Union Navy to help with the blockade of the port of Wilmington midway through the Civil War. More sites are planned along the NC coast in the next four to five years.

When visiting the site, please remember to "take only pictures, leave only bubbles." 📷

Michele Walker is the public information officer for the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the state agency that oversees North Carolina's state-owned museums, parks, historic sites, archives, zoo and aquariums.

Historical Wreck Diving

There are no scheduled dives on the *Condor* site. Diving on the site is on your own, but local dive shops may provide guides and equipment. Learn more at bit.ly/NCR-divesites. Wilmington area dive shops include:

Aquatic Safaris

diver@aquaticsafaris.com | 910-392-4386

Patriot Dive Center

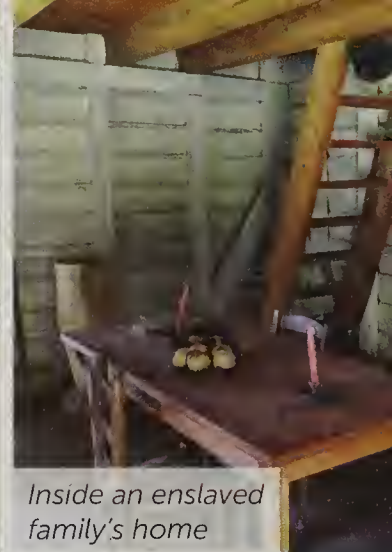
patriotdivecenter.com | 910-399-2814

Scuba Now

scuba-now.com | 910-395-5111



Lake Shore Trail



Inside an enslaved family's home

Nature and History in Harmony

A northeastern NC state park and a historic site are intertwined in time and place

Photos and text by Renee C. Gannon

Lake Phelps mysteriously formed more than 38,000 years ago on a swath of land between the Albemarle Sound and the Pamlico River. The 16,000-acre lake serves as the main footprint for Pettigrew State Park, located in Creswell and within both Washington and Tyrell counties. The area was once known as the Great Eastern Dismal and Great Alligator Dismal.

The lake's shallow waters (averaging 4.5-feet deep) rely solely on rainwater for replenishment—no streams enter or leave the shores. That keeps the water clean and clear, perfect for wood preservation. More than 30 dug-out canoes have been found in the lake's shallow waters, imprinting the area's significance to local Native Americans, including the Algonquin. One canoe is the second-oldest found in the United States, dating back to 2400 BC, making the canoe about 4,400 years old. The north shore makes up one of the last old-growth forests in eastern North Carolina.

Today, the park is a popular canoe, rowing and kayaking spot for recreation and fishing. Anglers have a chance at catfish, yellow perch and largemouth bass from motor- and non-motor boats,

the 224-foot pier, along the shore, or by standing knee-deep in the water.

Surrounding forests provide ample trails to explore the plants and trees that thrive in this environment, including ancient cypress and sycamore trees large enough for a person to stand inside. Tundra swans, snow geese, black bears, bobcats and others also call the park home.

Thought-provoking history

One of the park's trails, the Lake Shore, leads away from the boat ramp into the shade of the swampy canopy. The trail follows along dirt paths and boardwalks, until it breaks out of the trees and into the backyard of Somerset Place, a state historic site situated within Pettigrew State Park.

For 80 years, Somerset Place served as the base of operations for the Lake Company partnership, which owned agricultural fields and plantations covering 100,000 acres bordering Lake Phelps. The company brought slaves from Africa in the 1790s to dig more than 6 miles of canals that connected the lake to the nearby Scuppernong River for transportation and swamp draining, then later introduced a lock system to irrigate fields of corn and rice. Many of the canals are still visible today while driving in this area of Washington County.

In 1787, one partner, James Collins, founded Somerset Place. By 1865, the plantation was one of the largest in the upper South, so large that it held not

only barns, stables, smoke houses, a dairy, sawmills and the main home, but also a hospital, chapel and school within an industrial and residential complex.

Over the life of the plantation, more than 850 enslaved men, women and children lived and worked within the complex. As a means of accurately representing their living conditions, the state has meticulously reconstructed one- and four-bedroom homes along the foundations where enslaved families once lived, as well as the plantation hospital that served all that lived on the grounds, free and enslaved.

An interpretive tour highlights the plantation's story—of the Collins family, free laborers and the day-to-day struggles of those enslaved. Historians have researched the lives of those who worked and lived at the plantation, learning about their trades, family life and culture. The family lineage of one of the first enslaved to arrive in the late 1700s, Sucky Davis, has been traced down through the years to local families. Every summer, the site holds the Somerset Homecoming for families to acknowledge, honor and connect with enslaved ancestors.

Together, the two sites tell a tale from nature and history. Without one, the other would not exist. For families looking for an inexpensive way to enjoy both the outdoors and learn a bit of the state's history, a visit to Pettigrew State Park with a short layover at Somerset Place is a day trip must. ➡

Destination: Pettigrew

Pettigrew State Park

ncparks.gov/pettigrew-state-park
252-797-4475

Somerset Place

nchistoricsites.org/somerset | 252-797-4560



piratefestnc.com

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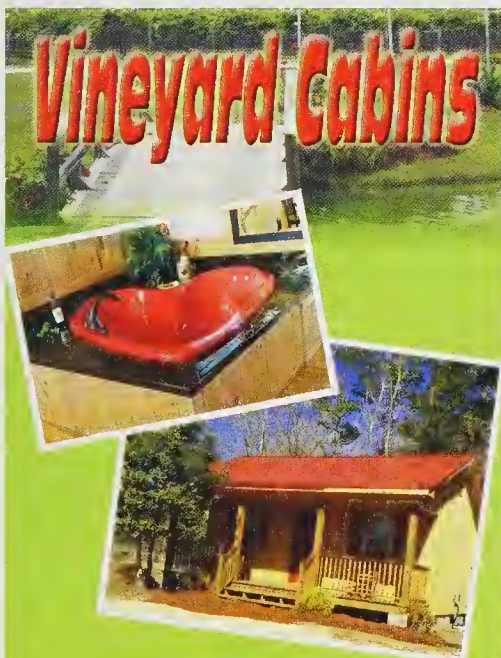
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Celebrity Dairy



Elodie Farms



Goat Lady Dairy dinner



Elodie Farms



Celebrity Dairy

Dinner on the Farm

Onsite meals bring new meaning to 'farm-to-table' dining

By Tara Verna

What could be more charming than an evening filled with farm-to-table food, gracious hosts, a pastoral setting, and adorable, rambunctious...goats?

At least three Piedmont goat dairies have taken to opening their gates to offer monthly dinners at their farms to not only showcase their cheeses, but also to build awareness of the connection between their animals and the food on your plate.

There's a farm tour included, where you can learn about cheesemaking and, yes, meet the goats themselves. All

farms recommend purchasing tickets in advance.

Goat Lady Dairy Randolph County

On Friday and Saturday evenings once a month in spring and fall, guests gather for hors d'oeuvres on the porch at Goat Lady Dairy. During a guided tour, hosts Carrie Routh and Bobby Bradds entertain with farm stories and philosophy. Afterwards, guests break bread together in the post and beam, passive solar dining room of the dairy barn with a five-course menu featuring Goat Lady Dairy cheeses and herbs with vegetables, and local pasture-raised meats from Bradds Family Farm. More chitchat follows with coffee or tea and decadent chocolate goat cheese truffles.

Tickets cost \$70; The next event is Friday, April 20, at 5:30 p.m.

goatladydairy.com | 336-824-2163

Elodie Farms Durham County

La Mancha, Alpine, Nubian, Toggenburg, Boer—no, these aren't the exotic menu but the quirky goat breeds you will meet at an Elodie Farms dinner in Rougemont. The evening begins with a goat meet-and-greet (and perhaps a glimpse of JoJo the donkey!), and a tour of the milking parlor and cheese room. Next guests sample Elodie Farms cheese paired with a five-course, locally-sourced menu. Guests are always welcome to wander into the kitchen of the 1914

Victorian Farmhouse to visit with Chef Ted Domville as he prepares the meal. Coffee, tea and Colombian canelazo served with dessert.

Tickets cost \$70 per person; The next event is Saturday, April 14, at 6 p.m.

elodiefarms.com | 919-479-4606

The Inn at Celebrity Dairy Chatham County

The third Sunday of each month, Celebrity Dairy hosts Brit and Fleming Pfann share their passion for seasonal and local food with 30 people in a three- or four-course, sit-down dinner. Socializing over goat cheese appetizers leads to the main event, featuring more of the dairy's creamy cheeses along with fresh meat, vegetables and flowers from local farms. Guests quickly become friendly acquaintances as they take their seats together at a long common table. The Pfanns entertain with stories of farm happenings. An after-dinner barn tour allows guests to meet the celebrity goats, perhaps hold a cuddly kid or two ("endlessly amusing," says co-owner Fleming), and let dinner settle before enjoying dessert and coffee.

Tickets cost \$55 per person; The next event is Sunday, April 15, at 1:30 p.m.

celebritydairy.com | 919-742-5176

+ carolinacountry.com/extras
Watch a video to meet the lucky goats at Elodie Farms (and learn a bit more about the dairy).



Tara Verna

Dinner in the Meadow Louisburg

At this annual event, a 1,000-acre goat farm plays host to a dinner where you can help support small farms while wooing your loved one. "Dinner in The Meadow" benefits the Leonard-Mobley Small Farm Fund, which provides grants to small farms in North Carolina.

Rolling green hills play backdrop to chefs, farms and food artisans who toil all day long to craft local flavors into tempting creations. Pick your palate pleasers, bid on the silent auction, and find a seat to participate in or at least enjoy the live auction of some specialty items.

Tickets cost \$100 and sell out quickly; the next event is Sunday, September 9

dinnerinthemeadow.org | 919-495-1305.



The Seagrove Experience

Artisan area is a dream come true for pottery lovers

Photos and text by Leah Chester-Davis

The Piedmont's rural areas warrant day trips just to see their shimmering lakes, bucolic meadows and appealing farmsteads. Add in the wonders of Seagrove, with the largest concentration of working potters in America, and you have a must-visit destination to explore.

Seagrove, a small town about 15 miles south of Asheboro, is known as the handmade pottery capital of the United States. The region, encompassing parts of Montgomery, Moore and Randolph counties, boasts roughly 50 studios and galleries within a 15-minute or so drive, with more pottery sites a bit further away. Some potters are located in the Seagrove town limits, while others have workshops that dot the surrounding countryside and neighboring communities.

Visiting their unique studios becomes like a progressive dinner of sorts. Instead of driving from house to house for food courses, you drive from studio to studio to feast your eyes on beautiful ceramics. Some locals have works at the Smithsonian

Institution in Washington, D.C., or in private collections worldwide. But whether you're a serious collector or simply partial to locally made items, you can see a wide range of styles, techniques and wares, from the folk tradition to high-brow ceramic art.

Pottery central

A good place to start any visit is the North Carolina Pottery Center in Seagrove (233 East Avenue), which promotes the history and ongoing tradition of the state's pottery making. Its light-filled, impressive structure, home to permanent collections, exhibitions and a gift shop, showcases creations from locals and other NC artisans. Nearby is an education building with wheels, electric kilns and other clay-working equipment. Wood-fired kilns outside give visitors an idea of different methods used. The Center's admission fee is \$2.50 for adults; \$1 for students 13 and up. It's open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Maps to local pottery sites are kept inside and out front.

Happenings


Most potter studios are open year-round, with special events held throughout the year. You can learn about them by visiting the websites (left) and getting on potter mailing lists. While Seagrove is fun any time, the region's annual Celebration of Spring is the perfect time to enjoy the

"greening up" season. The highways and byways are flush with fresh color, and the dogwoods and redbuds are in bloom. During this year's Celebration, set for Saturday and Sunday, April 21 and 22, more than 50 shops will host kiln openings, studio tours, demonstrations and special events.

Later in the year, the weekend before Thanksgiving, the Seagrove Pottery Festival (at Seagrove Elementary School) and the Celebration of Seagrove Potters (at Historic Luck's Cannery) offer up a jam-packed couple of days that include lots of pottery, auctions, live entertainment, children's activities, craft demonstrations, food, craft beer and wine.

Grounded in tradition

The Center and events such as these provide opportunities to learn about Seagrove's rich past. Pre-historic Native Americans used the area's abundant clay for functional and ceremonial objects, and immigrant potters in the 1700s helped build the tradition of Seagrove potters that continues today. Potter Crystal King's parents apprenticed with an eighth-generation potter.

"By carrying on this heritage, we pay homage to the potters before us, and the craft that we love," she says. 

Leah Chester-Davis (chester-davis.com) loves to explore North Carolina from her home in Davidson.

Destination: Seagrove Area

NC Pottery Center

ncpotterycenter.org | 336-873-8430

Seagrove Pottery

discoverseagrove.com | 336-517-7272

Travel Information

heartofnorthcarolina.com | 800-626-2672



One of Amy Morris' ornate Barbie dolls



Co-founder Susan Lane Morris

Toys for All Ages

The NC Museum of Dolls, Toys & Miniatures preserves treasures from the past

By Scott Gates

If you had a beloved toy growing up (and who of us didn't) —maybe a well-loved doll or go-to truck— chances are there's a version of it safely curated at the NC Museum of Dolls, Toys & Miniatures in Spencer. Co-founder Susan Lane Morris admits it's fairly common for visitors to light up at the sight of a long-forgotten toy found in one of its many display cases.

"So many come in and find things from their childhood—it's so wonderful to see," she says.

Morris and her daughter and co-founder Beth Morris Nance opened the nonprofit museum in June 2012, starting with a collection of model trains, trucks and airplanes, as well as a beautifully kept collection of ornate Barbie dolls from Morris' daughter, Amy. Amy's collection served as an inspiration for the museum, and reflects a passion for life she displayed throughout years of coping with a terminal illness.

Destination: Spencer

NC Museum of Dolls, Toys & Miniatures
Spencer
ncmdtm.com | 704-762-9359

An ever-growing collection

The museum has since blossomed, filling a 4,000-square-foot space in downtown Spencer with an ever-expanding collection of vintage toys. The collection, built through donations, has grown to a size where exhibits now have to be rotated through the space.

"My favorite thing about the museum is knowing that those who donate to the museum's permanent collection will always have their legacy continue on," Nance says. "The museum is such a special place, and remembering those who came before us is an honor and a privilege."

Exhibits include dollhouses, dolls, trains, trucks, airplanes, board games and specialty toys, including Girl Scout and Boy Scout branded items. Miniature soldiers recreate scenes from the Civil War and the Battle of Waterloo. More than 100 Shirley Temple dolls comprise one of the largest of such collections in the Eastern United States, and a rare collection of 1910 Schoenhut circus figurines is carefully staged under a sprawling big top.

A model train village takes up most

of the rear section of the museum—it took removing front windows to move the display in—populated by Lionel trains with flourishes like a flowing waterfall, working lighthouse and other surprises. Detailed model airplanes hang overhead, suspended mid-flight over the train table.

More than a museum

Beyond a space for curating vintage toys, the museum has become a hub of activity in the community, bringing new life to a building that previously housed both a package store and a hardware store. The space has become a venue for benefit sales, workshops, book signings and tea parties, just to name a few.

The museum has partnered with Salisbury-based Rowan Museum for "Night at the Museums" events (inspired by the movies), and other partnerships help keep the space thriving.

"We partner with individuals as well as doll, toy and miniature clubs across the United States in order to maintain rotating exhibits and special displays," Nance explains. "Partnerships are very important to the success of the museum." 📍



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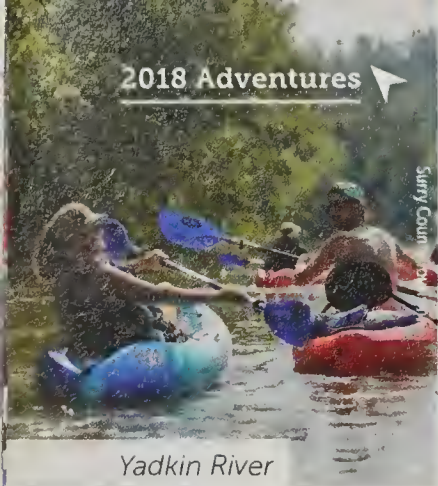
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Yadkin River



Reeves Theater



Yadkin Valley Wine Festival

A Spirited Foothills Town

Sample wine and tap your feet to live music in Elkin

By Karen Olson House

On a recent Saturday night in Elkin, the audience was beaming at the Reeves. Amanda Anne Platt and The Honeycutters were performing, and the show was a hit.

But there was another reason folks were so pleased. The theater recently re-opened after a long restoration, and it's a stunner.

The Reeves began as a stately art deco movie theater, back in 1941. By the time it closed in 1994, it was the Elk Twin. The landmark was a gloomy shell on Main Street for many years, but today it's a stylish performing space with exceptional acoustics and main floor and balcony seating. There's also a farm-to-table cafe, open Monday through Saturday, which serves local wine and beer.

Its concert series, featuring emerging national artists and new local faces, takes place Friday and Saturday

evenings. It's a great place to take a date, spouse or friend, and there is accessibility for those with limited mobility.

Main Street and more

Elkin, a quaint foothills town, offers shops, antique stores and restaurants within easy walking distance. A quick sampling of fun stops on Main Street includes: The Angry Troll (wood-fired pizza and local beers from six lines at this restaurant-brewery); The November Room (a combination vendor market with fashionable clothing and handmade crafts and snack/wine/beer bar); Barking Coyote Coffee Shop & Farm Store (fair-trade coffee and made-from-scratch items like pimento cheeses, seasonal jams and freshly baked scones); and Southern & Main (gourmet meals like beef braised short ribs and Sunday brunch mimosas).

Shout-outs for eateries that aren't downtown, but not too far away, include Generations, Prime Thai and Skull Camp Brewery and Smokehouse.

Recreational pursuits

The Yadkin River meanders through Elkin, and outdoor opportunities abound. You can put a kayak in at Crater Park in Elkin (among the river access points in the region). Area outfitters include Rocky Forest River Run in Elkin. NC's Mountains-To-Sea trail goes through town (marked by MST signs), and you can also hike the historic Overmountain Victory trail (start at Elkin Municipal Park). Many visitors use Elkin as a base to

explore places beyond, too, like the awe-inspiring trails at Stone Mountain State Park (16 miles away). Couples enjoy the thrilling hot air balloon rides that Yakin Valley Balloon Adventures launches in Boonville (12 miles away).

Wineries

Elkin, located in Wilkes and Surry counties, is in the heart of the Yadkin Valley Wine region. More than 20 wineries are located within 15 miles of Elkin alone. Suggestions include the Tuscany-like Raffaldini Vineyards and scenic Elkin Creek Vineyard (take time to stroll to its pretty creek). A good way to learn about area wineries is to stop by the welcome center in nearby Jonesville (exit 82, off I-77).

Lodging

There's a range of options in Elkin, including unique cabins, an RV/tent campground, motels, chain hotels and Airbnb and VRBO sites. The Elkin Fairfield Inn, off I-77 just north of town, recently worked with Surry-Yadkin EMC to install electric vehicle charging stations for guests needing a charge.

Events

Upcoming events in Elkin include the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival (May 19) (yvwf.com or 336-526-1111). Car cruises are typically held May through early fall months. For updates, check facebook.com/CruiseDowntownElkin.

+ carolinacountry.com/extras
Watch scenes from Elkin set to native Sam Tayloe's song "Home."



Beet Salad at Southern on Main

Destination: Elkin

Elkin Visitors Center
116 E Market Street
yadkinvalleynyc.com | 336-526-1111

Travel Information
whatsupinelkinnc.com

The Reeves Theater
reevestheater.com | 336-258-8240

Yadkin Valley Wine Country
yadkinvalleywinecountry.com



Downtown Burnsville

Sam Dean



Jeremy Bare



Roaring Creek Falls

Katie C. Gannon

Family Adventure Under the Stars

A galaxy surrounds the small, vibrant town of Burnsville

By Renee C. Gannon

The snaking, switchback-laden Highway 80 traverses from Mount Mitchell State Park to Micaville, where it intersects with Highway 19, taking you south, to Burnsville, or north, to Spruce Pine. Flecks of mica glint roadside in creeks and rivers, a lasting reminder of a mining industry that opened up the area to the outside world.

A family adventure awaits in this area along the edge of the Pisgah Forest. Mount Mitchell State Park looms overhead, with its peak, at 6,684 feet above sea level, accessible by car via the Blue Ridge Parkway then a short walk to the top. At its base along Highway 80 are lesser known trails to small waterfalls such as 75-foot Setrock Creek Falls and 50-foot Roaring Creek Falls. A thriving art scene is evident in the many arts and craft studios that dot the highways and side roads from the Blue Ridge Parkway to Burnsville. The Western NC Quilt Trail offers an easy “I Spy” game of spot the colorful squares at every turn.

Campgrounds and locally owned lodges offer various amenities to travelers. Albert’s Lodge, off Highway 80, is a favorite for hikers, bikers and outdoor enthusiasts. The lodge is within walking distance of Roaring Creek Falls, and an open field behind the lodge sits in the shadow of Black Mountain. At night, this field also provides a perfect low-light opportunity to view the Milky Way.

Day sights

The small town of Burnsville is located a short drive from its big sister Asheville. The slower pace of Burnsville allows visitors to enjoy local stores, art studios, restaurants and breweries. My children enjoyed hunting for the painted murals along building walls, with the Wizard of Oz Yellow Brick Road the favorite. Breakfast at the Pig & Grits served as an early morning treat. The hot dog/taco eatery Rad Dawgz followed by Cool Catz ice cream next door won the evening for the under-16 set. Blind Squirrel Brewery scored high for the adults. Fresh brewed coffee and hot chocolate from Appalachian Java and Rescue Dog Café topped the night.

Stellar nights

As twilight approached, the stars came out and a winding, dark drive upwards led to another adventure at a local, internationally recognized observatory.

From almost 3,000 feet above sea level, The Milky Way looks like dense clouds made of thousands of stars to the naked eye. The elevation and lack of light pollution allow your vision to clear, letting the starlight brighten the sky above. Viewed through the telescopes at the Bare Dark Sky Observatory, your eye witnesses more than stars—the Swan Nebula, double stars in the Big Dipper named Mizar and Alcor, the rings of Saturn. With the naked eye, visitors learn how to watch for the International Space Station,

Hubble Telescope and even a Russian satellite as they cross in and out of view above the concrete observatory deck. The scientists running the event are enthusiastic to share their knowledge about the stars and the myths behind the constellations.

Located at the Mayfield Community College Earth to Sky Park in Burnsville, the observatory offers monthly viewing events through two telescopes: a planetary telescope for viewing planets and the moon, and the recently installed StarStructure Newtonian telescope (called the “Sam Scope,” the largest in the state), which offers views of the jet stream, distant planets, stars and constellations.

The Burnsville area offers a plethora of activities to satisfy every family member. The stargazing is a can’t-miss opportunity. Nothing is more satisfying to a parent than hearing their teenager comment that witnessing Orionid meteorite showers leave bluish streaks across the sky and seeing the faint outline of Saturn’s rings were her favorite parts of a weekend spent with her family unit. 📍

Destination: Burnsville

Bare Dark Sky Observatory
mayland.edu/observatory | 828-766-1233

Albert’s Lodge
alberts-burnsville.com | 828-675-4691

Travel Information
exploreburnsville.com | 828-682-7413

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Outer Banks National
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Mission Crossing—NC 194

Mount Mitchell Scenic Drive—NC 128

NC Scenic Byways

Preserving character and legacy along our roads

By Scott Gates

North Carolina is peppered with little roadside signs marking a simple yet profound designation: NC Scenic Byway. Once you start looking for them, you'll see these signs pop up all over the place, and it's always a good indication to keep driving—you're in for a treat.

Our state currently boasts 60 of these scenic byways, making up 2,300 miles of road through the mountain, Piedmont and coastal regions that have been recognized for their natural beauty and historical, recreational or cultural significance to North Carolina. The byways range from 1.5 miles (Airlie Road in New Hanover County) to 173 miles (Lafayette's Tour), from curvy mountain roads to ferry rides across coastal waterways.

"Each time I ride a byway, I see something new in the landscape or I learn something more about the history or culture of North Carolina," says Connie Morgan, Scenic Byway

coordinator with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). "I also meet the locals and learn what makes their community special. These people are the heart and soul of North Carolina."

Preserving Roadside Treasures

Although these roads have long been known to the locals who drive them, it wasn't until the mid- to late-1980s that North Carolinians began petitioning the state to create its own official network of scenic roads. That public push led to the creation of a task force, and by March 1990 the NC Board of Transportation approved the Scenic Byways program and designated an initial set of 31 roads. The General Assembly passed a bill in 1993 that authorized the program and prohibited any new billboards from going up along designated routes.

The program was officially kicked off in 1994 along the French Broad River, which makes for idyllic scenery along several of the designated mountain routes.

New routes are being considered and added all the time. The newest, Big Horse Creek Byway in Ashe County, was designated in April 2016. Those wishing to nominate a stretch of road should notify NC Scenic Byway Program staff and obtain an NC Scenic Byway Study List Application.

The Scenic Route

The best way to find a route is by using the free guide provided by NCDOT either at bit.ly/NCbyways or by mail (see sidebar for address). The list of NC Scenic Byways includes four nationally-recognized routes; visit fhwa.dot.gov/byways/states/NC for more information on each.

When planning your trip, keep in mind that byways typically are true "scenic routes," and don't often make for the shortest trip between points A and B. Make sure you will start the journey with enough daylight to enjoy the road, although some routes do make for an amazing sunset. And although the views provide a welcome distraction, the driver should pay close attention to the road—many are also enjoyed by cyclists and motorcycles, and wildlife will likely be more plentiful along these routes.

"North Carolina is so diverse and has so many hidden secrets," Morgan says. "I love discovering them on our byways that travel through the most beautiful scenic areas of our state." 🗺️



carolinacountry.com/extras

Watch a video series to learn more about the history of the Scenic Byways program, as well as details about sample routes and how new routes are designated.

Free byways guides

Download a free guide at bit.ly/NCbyways or request by mail:

NCDOT Scenic Byways Program

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A Teacher's Guide is available by request, providing lesson plans developed to tie into the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for fourth grade.

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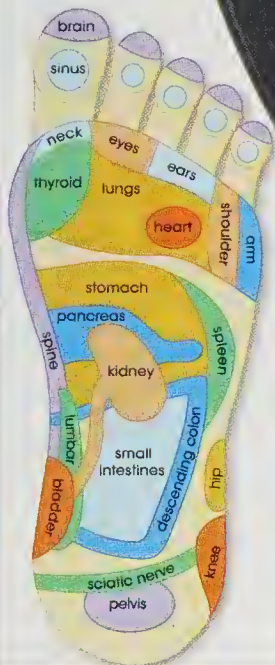
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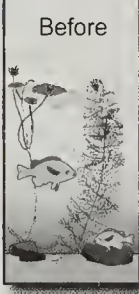
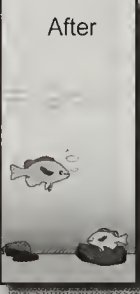
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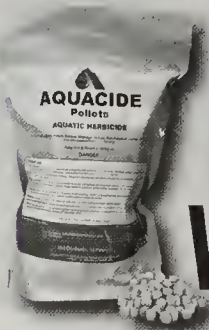
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Easter Brunch Asparagus Casserole

This light and velvety casserole will be a favorite with the cheese lovers in your crowd for Easter brunch, or anytime. Other vegetables can be substituted or added, and have fun trying other cheeses too. You can even add in diced ham or bacon. Use this recipe as a base and spiff up to make it your own.

- 1 pound asparagus, ends trimmed
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 tall can evaporated milk
- 2 cups shredded Velveeta cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Several turns freshly cracked black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 1½ quart baking dish.

Melt butter in skillet over medium heat. Cut asparagus into 1-inch pieces and sauté in butter 3 to 4 minutes until tender.

Combine asparagus with all the other ingredients and stir to combine. Pour into prepared baking dish. Bake about 30 minutes until it sets in center and starts to brown on top.

Let stand about 10 minutes, and serve while hot.

Note: This can be mixed a day ahead to bake at serving time.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

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Unless otherwise noted, recipes on this page are from Wendy Perry, a culinary adventurer and blogger, who chats about goodness around NC on her blog at WendysHomeEconomics.com.

From Your Kitchen

Coconut Cake

- 1 box yellow cake mix
 - 8 ounces sour cream
 - ⅔ cup oil
 - 4 eggs
- Icing**
- 2½ cups granulated sugar
 - 3 cups water
 - 1 pound fine shredded coconut
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 10–15 large marshmallows

Mix cake ingredients and bake according to directions on box.

For icing, mix sugar, water, coconut and vanilla and bring to a boil.



Turn heat down to medium and boil for 20 minutes. Take off burner and add marshmallows; stir until melted.

Cool slightly and spoon on each layer while cake is still warm.

Recipe courtesy of Ann Wheeler, Franklinton

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—Jenny Lloyd, recipes editor



Sticky Pig Twigs

Make a pile of these, because they will disappear right before your eyes. Enjoy as is, or chopped on salads. Especially good on a juicy summer BLT... add more hot pepper if your crowd can take it!

- 1 pound thick sliced bacon, cut into halves
- 4 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon stone ground mustard
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Blend all ingredients (except bacon).

Line baking pan with foil or parchment paper. Place wire cooling rack over lined pan and spray. Lay slices of bacon on rack. Bake 15 minutes. Brush bacon with glaze and continue baking about 5 minutes. Turn bacon over and brush.

Continue brushing and cooking at 5 minute intervals, checking to make sure bacon does not burn. Remove from oven when deep brown and edges are crisp and curled, about 30 to 35 minutes total. Cool on wax paper or rack.

Note: If making multiple batches, change liner between new pans as the sugar will drip onto foil, burn and smoke up your kitchen.

Yield: 1 pound, but easily doubled



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